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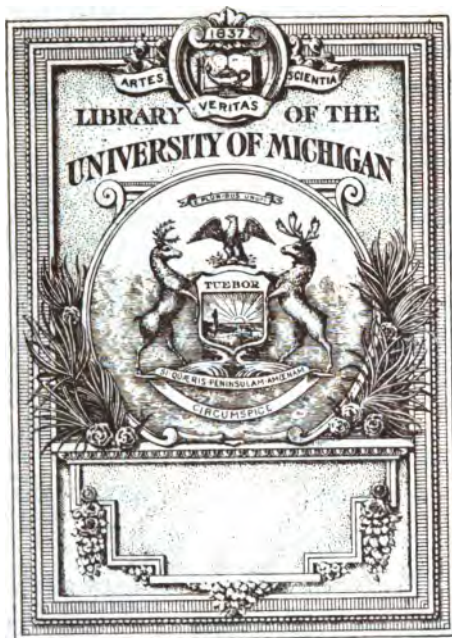
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40. THE ROMANCE OF JENNY HARLOWE, and Sketches of Maritime Life.

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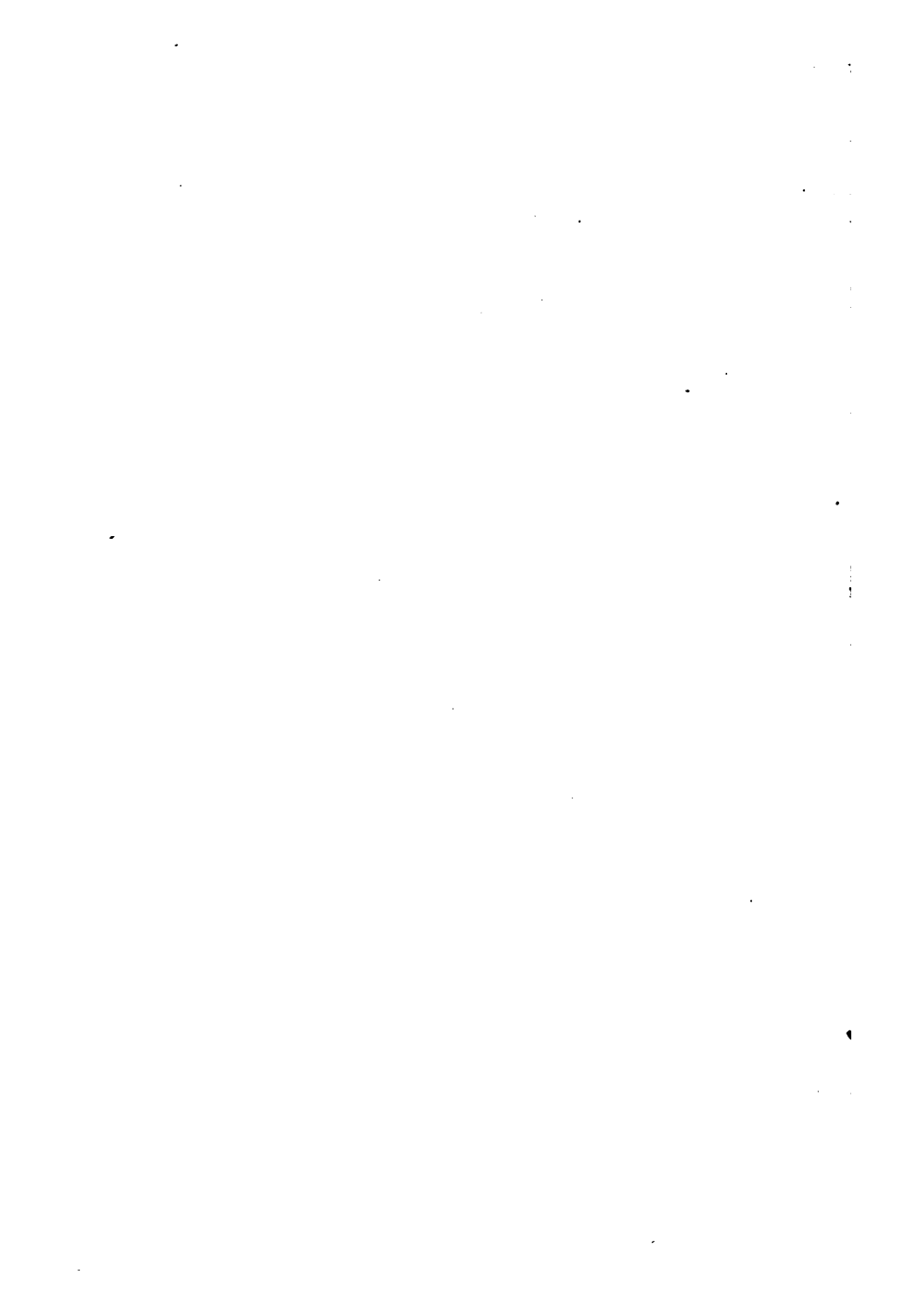
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THE ROMANCE
OF JENNY HARLOWE

AND SKETCHES OF MARITIME LIFE

BY

W. CLARK RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERY OF THE 'OCEAN STAR,'"
"ROUND THE GALLEY-FIRE," ETC.

NEW YORK
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1889

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THE ROMANCE OF JENNY HARLOWE.

I.

I HAD felt poorly and low for some time. Nobody could say what was the matter with me, but no doubt my "general tone," as the doctors term it, had been depressed to a greater degree than I was conscious of by first of all the anxieties of a tedious lawsuit, and next by the death of my dear mother, whose only son I was, and with whom I had lived without a day's separation since the death of my father, ten years previously. I emptied many bottles of tonic, but to no purpose; I passed some weeks at the seaside; I went on a holiday tour through France and Switzerland—for I was an idle man with means sufficient to enable me to do as I pleased and to go where I chose—but nothing came of my search after health; my spirits continued low and the feeling of poorliness remained with me.

At last one day the old doctor who had attended my father and mother throughout their married life advised me to go a voyage round the world.

"Your little excursions," said he, "are of no use. In my opinion you want at least a year of the ocean. In a voyage round the world you are perpetually shifting the temperature, you are incessantly breathing winds which blow from all quarters of the globe; you are

carried into a totally new sphere of life where everything is fresh and stirring, where every condition of shore existence wears a totally new face. My advice to you then, Christopher, is to take ship and sail away."

I turned the matter over, and presently found a sort of liking for his scheme. There was nothing to keep me at home; I had long desired to have a look round the globe, and I had now the very best excuse that could be imagined for humouring the wish. To what part of the earth should I proceed? I wrote to a friend who had been a merchant sailor for some years and then betaken himself to farming, and asked his advice. He recommended a trip to Australia and back.

"The Indian voyage is too hot," said he, "for a man in quest of health and who I take it wants his nerves screwed up till they are in tune and fit for life to make pleasant music upon. If you go to India you twice penetrate the broiling parallels of the Equator on your way there, and you risk the sickening stagnation of the Bay of Bengal; but the Australian trip gives you all the climates which are good for you. My advice is, take ship to Sydney or Melbourne."

India was more to my liking than Australia; there was something of real romance in the fancy of a voyage to the distant, delightful provinces of the sun, with their sparkling pageantries of nature, and their glories of palatial cities; but the recommendation of my friend prevailed, and forthwith I went to work to hear of a ship proceeding at a convenient date to an Australian port.

What I am about to tell happened in the year 1848. Among the vessels named in the shipping lists of the day as bound to Sydney, New South Wales, was a craft of seven hundred tons called the *Lady Charlotte*. Her date suited me the best of all the others contained in the list,

and I chose her for that and for no other reason. I called upon her owner in Fenchurch Street, who told me that the *Lady Charlotte* was not advertised as a passenger vessel; that if I looked at the advertisement again I would see that it referred to her wholly as loading a freight for such and such a port; but that as there were one or two spare cabins aft I was welcome to sail in her at a moderate charge, though I should certainly be the only passenger on board, and must therefore not expect the sort of table that was provided by the liners. The very condition of my health made me seem to find something agreeable in the prospect of such privacy—I may say of such isolation as was here offered. I accepted the offer of the owner to view the vessel at once, and proceeded to the West India Dock in company with a clerk. I knew nothing whatever about the sea, and to me, saving in the matter of paintwork, one ship seemed uncommonly like another. I took notice, however, that the *Lady Charlotte* seemed a new and very clean vessel, her decks more like a yacht's than a merchantman's; her fittings with a hint almost of dandification in a certain elaborate elegance of finish. As we approached, the clerk called my attention to the hull, and told me she was what is termed a clipper. Certainly she was very sharp about the bows, with yellow sheathing that came high to her milk-white sides, along which ran a thin yellow line. I entered her cabin, and found a small, plain interior; comfortable and with a seawardly substantiality about the look of the bulkhead and fittings. The captain's berth was right aft, and occupied the breadth of the ship. Just forward of the living room, as I may call it, were four small cabins, two on either hand, each lighted by a kind of bull's-eye scuttle in the side. Those on the port side were vacant; they were alike in

size, and I chose the aftermost one. The brace abreast were respectively occupied by the first and second mates.

A fortnight later I joined the ship at Gravesend. The excitement raised in me by the prospect of a long voyage, coupled with the hurry and business of preparing for my departure, which took me away from thinking of myself, had already done me good, and when I stepped on board I already seemed to feel stronger, as though there was a virtue in the very deck of the ship that penetrated the system with a quality of life and healing. I was much charmed by the truly dainty picture the vessel made as she lay straining lightly at her cable upon the silver surface of the river that was flowing softly from London to the sea. The white and gold of her side struck the reflection of a delicate marble-like form into the white gleam in which she rested motionless as though in an expanse of quicksilver. The still, yet flowing, waters gave back the image of her spars and rigging with a streak of red at the inverted peak and a sparkle as of gold deep down where the gilded vane at the mainroyal masthead found a mirror for itself. The captain's name was William Christian; he was a little man, of a dry and comical cast of countenance. His lips continuously lay apart in an odd sort of twist that was funny, though mirthless, as though the skin lay too taut upon him to keep his mouth shut. A semicircle of white beard, soft as smoke, went rolling as it were under his chin from ear to ear. He had broken his nose when a youth, which heightened considerably the effect upon the beholder of an eager, nervous twinkling of his left eye that came very near to a constant winking. He was a short man, with a broken, deep-sea voice, and, spite of his odd face, of an aspect so kindly and warm-hearted that I felt a liking for him the moment he

grasped me by the hand, and bade me welcome on board.

The chief mate, on the other hand, Mr. Marling, was a tall, melancholy man, with a heavy black beard and an expression of countenance that in repose was curiously despairful. He had but little of the appearance of a sailor, but happily the traditional grog-blossomed, purple-nosed, stained-eyed face of the mariner is by no means a condition of sea-going qualities. No sooner was the order given for the ship to get under way than Mr. Marling showed himself in his true character. His expression of despair vanished ; his voice rose into hurricane power as he encouraged the men to heave at the windlass ; his cries filled the ship as sail was made. Cloth by cloth the canvas whitened the yards, mounted the stays, and arched like the pinions of sea-birds from the bowsprit and jibboom, until the *Lady Charlotte*, in the keen brilliant sunshine of the afternoon, showed as a symmetrical surface of snow, with something of the iridescence of foam in her glittering complexion, from the line of gold upon her milk-white sides to where the little royals rounded yearning from under the shining buttons of her trucks.

I was fairly under way at last, and it was with a heart full of mingled emotions that I stood surveying the shores of the widening river sliding softly past on either quarter into those delicate films and blobs which will make one start at times as though one were looking at the receding land through tears.

It was all fine weather and pleasant sailing until we had got to the back of the Goodwin Sands, when it came on to blow a fresh south-easterly breeze, which reefed our canvas for us and set the little clipper dancing wildly, with her yards braced fore and aft. I had held

up stoutly throughout the night, and at daybreak next morning made shift to crawl up on deck and take a look around me, and, but for my nausea, I believe I should have considered the scene as fine an ocean piece as the world could produce: an angry Channel sea running in short, green, foaming billows; a very jumble of olive-coloured horizon leaping and dissolving against a hard piebald sky, out of which, to windward, there blew a constant scattering of scud-like vapour, as though the gale were bringing up the smoke of a city of factories hidden far behind the tumbling line. Here a smack, with brown sail, running with froth to the hawse-pipe, now rising, as it were, to the very sight of her keel, then sinking till the letters of her canvas were out of sight; there an old collier, gallantly breasting the surge with apple-bow, washing through it with wild yawings of her jibboom, her narrow bands of canvas dark as indigo against the sky, and frequent leapings of spray like bursts of steam, soaring to the blows and plungings of her wet, black, gleaming head. The *Lady Charlotte* was thrashing through it handsomely. I could easily imagine how airy and graceful would be the beauty of the sight she made to one beholding her from a little distance as her marble-white form rose to the creaming peak, ruddily veining it with the yellow sheathing as though a sunbeam were sparkling in the heart of the seething yeast. She "looked-up," as the term is, like a racing yacht, and the wake astern of her ran away into the windy distance straight as a chalked line. The sailors sprawled about the wet decks in streaming oil-skins. Mr. Jansen, the second mate, a Scandinavian, with ginger-coloured hair, trembling to the wind under the brim of his sou'-wester, held to a weather backstay, keeping a bright look-out. I lamented the nausea tha'

prevented me from entering into the full spirit of this roaring, humming, seething, flying picture of ocean life. But sickness proved too strong for me. I returned to my cabin, and, rolling into my bunk again, lay there for the next two days motionless and almost speechless, attended by the captain's servant, and often by the captain himself.

However, I had recovered and grown fairly sea-proof before we were clear of the Channel. I arrived on deck full of misgivings, and holding on stubbornly as I moved, and found the *Lady Charlotte* sweeping before a strong breeze on the quarter, flinging the spray from either bow in glittering masses and curtseying with long-drawn gestures over a tall flowing sea that swept to the counter and underran the buzzing craft in folds of brilliant blue water, on which rose and fell an exquisite lace-work of froth beautified by foam-bells and radiant with the flashings of expiring bubbles. The rushing air made me feel a new man. When I had descended to the cabin I carried with me as hearty an appetite as any of the Jacks forward could have taken with them to a meal in the fore-castle. The dinner consisted of a round of boiled beef, hearty puddings spotted with currants almost out of hail of one another, a dish of potatoes, smoking in their jackets, biscuit and soft bread, and bottled beer. From the mere contemplation of such a repast as this I should, a few hours before, have shrunk with horror. Yet now I ate with the avidity of a shipwrecked man. I do not know that I ever before in my life made so hearty a meal. The captain, with his congenital wink and his slewed nose, eyed me with an expression of encouragement and admiration.

"There's no better sheathing than salt beef, Mr. Furlong," said he, "to keep out sea-sickness. Some

recommmend the sufferer to wrap himself up in beef-steaks. I have nothing to say against beef-steaks, 'specially when they're accompanied with onions, but the physic I sign my name under is corned beef. Why is it that sailors give over being nauseated at sea almost as soon as they feel unwell? 'Cause of the junk they eat, Mr. Furlong. The first meal of junk they swallow stiffens 'em out with a proper sort of nautical sensibilities. Had ye shipped aboard a Blackwall Liner, instead of falling to and driving away all oncomfortable feelings with salt beef, ye'd have been humouring the lady-like feelings with land-going kickshaws, and 'ud been glad to turn in again. No, sir, salt beef's your physic; you're a made man now ye've dined in ship-shape fashion."

And so it seemed; for from that hour I never again suffered from the least qualm, never knew a moment's uneasiness, whether pitching heavily in a head sea, or rolling sickeningly on the long, stagnant, glass-like swell of the feverish inter-tropic calm.

Nevertheless I had taken care to provide myself with a number of private comforts which lasted me fairly into the heart of the South Atlantic, and both the captain and myself found them very agreeable relishes to the exceedingly plain fare of the cabin table. I had also laid in a good stock of books along with several packs of cards, a chess-board, and the like, for there was little to expect in that way on board a mere cargo craft. But for a long while I required no better amusement than the study of the numberless and beautiful effects of the ocean, and of the inner life, as I may call it, of the queer little floating world in which I had launched myself, and broken adrift from all ties of civilization and shore-going troubles and diversions. Of the sea I had hitherto

known nothing. Feeble glimpses of it I had indeed obtained in crossing the Channel, or in surveying it from the white heights of the British sea-board; but of everything that makes it fascinating beyond all imaginations of the various splendour and rich variety of the substantial earth, I was as ignorant as a child; that is to say, I had read of its beauty, its majesty, and so forth in books from which I had arisen without receiving so much as a single impression. From the quarter-deck of the little milk-white *Lady Charlotte* I had the mighty truth lying round about me. I beheld it in the scarlet sunset, when the mountainous ocean billow ran blood-red to the incandescent limb of the sinking luminary; in the melancholy gray of dawn brightening into an incomparable loveliness of pearl and silver and azure; in the leap of the flying ball of greenish golden moon from one speeding wing of vapour to another, with a lagoon of dark and liquid blue between, out of which would fall the flashful javelins of the planet, making molten ivory of the melting crests of the surge, and streaming a fan-shaped throbbing wake of star-coloured splendour from the remotest rim of the deep to the white sides of the *Lady Charlotte*, in which there would be kindled for a breath a hundred constellations.

No need to enlarge the oceanic catalogue. Every day brought its change, and out of every change there came to me an impulse and a spirit of its own. Captain Christian would sometimes rally me on my long and seemingly aimless starings at what seemed to him the familiar line of the horizon, or the equally familiar floating lift of the brine alongside, or at a heaven of shifting shadows and lights, long since rendered commonplace to an eye that sought it only for indications of weather and mainly for prosperous winds. The long mate, with

his black beard and despairing face, would wonder at me too, and once having charge of the deck, and the captain being below, stepped up to my side and asked me in a subdued hurricane note, softened yet by respect and good-nature, what I could see out yonder there to keep me staring so patiently.

"Why," said I, "the truth is, Mr. Marling, I am like a boy let loose in a scene that, to him at all events, is full of enchantments. I am all eyes and ears and enjoyment of this life of yours."

"It's setting up your rigging afresh for you anyhow, sir," said he.

"Ay," I answered, "young as I am—twenty-nine last birthday, Mr. Marling—I feel to be growing younger every day."

"A good sign, sir; when a man ails and he doesn't know why"—he had heard me talk of my health to the captain at table—"there's naught left in the wide world that's good for him but salt wind. Salt wind as a man gets it out here; too far off for the smell of the cooking of a city, and further off than the smoke of London will stretch if the drainings of all its chimneys were laid up into a four-stranded cable. Yet, Lord bless me, a man wants the eyes of a ghost-seer to keep him finding out objects of admiration in this here"—he soberly and slowly turned his face round the sea—"if it isn't a ship on fire, which is a striking sight, I allow, or the fall of a meteor nigh as big as the moon. Mr. Furlong, sir, lucky for you you aren't a sailor, for if ye *were* you'd find nothing to look at upon the ocean, the wide world over, that wouldn't make you wish for as much dry land 'twixt you and it as stretches from Cape Horn to Labrador."

No doubt both Captain Christian and Mr. Marling, and for the matter of that the second mate, too, a red-

headed man, with a face like a sheep, owing to his eyes being set well back against his ears, laughed at me in their sleeve as a sentimentalist; and maybe I fully deserved their secret ridicule. I had seen little of the world, and as the only child of a woman who had been left comfortably well-to-do by her husband, I was without a calling, and knew nothing of the struggles of life. My character had been rendered somewhat nerveless and soft by years of steadfast homekeeping, and it was still coloured with much of that warm, romantic complexion, which in most cases fades out of the mind of ingenuous youth after it has left school a few months. However, my disposition was of a kind to enable me to enjoy the voyage; and in the mere discipline of the ship I found a hundred things to admire, to wonder at, and to watch with unwearied interest. The clewing up and furling of light sails to a passing squall; the setting of canvas afresh as the windward sun flashed up the crystalline smoke of the sweeping shower storming along black into the leeward distance; the shrilling and trumpeting and vibratory resonant roaring of the rising gale; the eager, piercing strains from the boatswain's pipe; the wild, hoarse shouts of the mates; the giddy leaping aloft of the seamen, and the posture of their forms as they overhung the mowing yards—rolling up the canvas or tying the reef-points with a figure jockeying either yard-arm, distant, yet clearly defined against the whirling soot of the revolving heavens;—these, and a score of like sights and scenes, supplied me with abundant entertainment; and liberally as I had furnished myself with books, I do not know that I had read so much as a single volume of them all, even by the time when we had run out of the north-east trades, and our sailors with dripping brows and bare mossy breasts

were box-hauling the yards about to catch every light catspaw that tarnished the glassy surface of the equinoctial waters.

It had been a quiet, hot day since dawn. Our latitude I do not remember, but we were south of the equator, and the captain talked presently of falling in with the south-east trade-wind anon. There was a long light swell running from the westward with the lifted brows of it just wrinkled by a hot air of wind which held our canvas steady. Lines of fire in ripples, delicate as pianoforte wire, broke from our clipper stem, and came threading to the counter where they met, floating and melting into a short, oil-smooth surface of wake, at the extremity of which there had been hanging with sickening patience ever since daylight had broken out of the east, the leaning, scythe-like dorsal fin of a shark, with a misty flash in the wet black leather of it at times as though it was some big beer-bottle in tow of us.

Now, this was dull work, and I will own to feeling the oppression of it. The ocean had submitted the same scene for days, and though I had benefited in health too magically by the voyage to be sensible of any depression and monotony, yet the weariness of miles of sluggish folds sulkily shouldering their way from west to east, the wearisome, clock-like dip of the ship's side, the pendulum reel of her spars, with the ceaseless, tiresome noises of gear chafing in blocks, of straining parrels and trusses, of bulkheads groaning to the tension of the keel, of the drowsy sobbing of water along the bends, were beginning to tell upon me. There was nothing to look at, no rich or nimble cloud pictures, no headlong rush of surge volleying its snow in exhausted pursuit of us, no vision of passing ship making the melancholy horizon on a sudden as vital with human interest as a line of coast. The sea

spread dimly into blue distance; the cream-coloured brow of a cloud would show only to faint out upon the swimming, brassy dazzle like a wreath of steam.

"This gives you a proper taste of the sea-life, Mr. Furlong," said the tall mate to me. "It's hereabouts where sentiment leaks out of the pores of sailors' skins like their perspiration, and they never get it back again. Tell ye what, sir,—the cloud effect that would now best take your eye I allow would be a black body of vapour right astern, with a swinging breeze of wind inside of it."

"Right!" I answered. "A succession of calms, with baffling light airs, is like an attack of low spirits. I no longer search the horizon and the sky, Mr. Marling, for the atmospheric tapestries which delighted me in the North Atlantic, but for some little hole in the blue out of which a favourable wind may blow."

"Anyhow," he exclaimed, taking a long step to the side and throwing a glance overboard and then aloft, "we're crawling through it, with our head the right way too, and that's better than standing still for three blessed weeks, as has been my lot in these very parts, with your bowsprit and jibbooms winding around like a corkscrew, and the pitch 'twixt the seams like soft soap, and the cockroaches below as full of life as rats at midnight. What a life it is, to be sure! How clever a man is to adopt it! Think of passing one's existence in walking up and down the decks for four hours, then turning in and sleeping for four hours, then rousing up afresh and walking again for another four hours, and so on till your brains grow as hard in your head as the inside of an egg that's over-boiled!"

He strode again to the side, expectorated with a face of despair and an air of loathing, and marched aft to the wheel.

II.

THE night of this to me most memorable day came down upon the *Lady Charlotte* as dark and silent as the grave. The draught of air was small and fine, and held the light sails asleep. The long, sullen ocean swell of the day had softened down into a faint and regular respiration, upon which the ship floated with such rhythmic gentleness that there was scarce a flap of cloth to be heard up in the dusk, where the heavy single topsails and the fore and main courses glimmered in pallid spaces against the delicate gloom. Fire trembled in the water on either hand to the slow creeping of the vessel through the liquid darkness. On the starboard quarter was sometimes visible the dull, gleaming outline of the great shark that had been hanging in our wake since dawn. There was no moon. The stars hung few and faint in the east and south, with a brighter glare amongst them in the west, and one large planet near to the black verge of the deep with a thin line of icy radiance trembling under it.

The hush of the night seemed to enter like a spirit into the fabric of the ship after eight bells had been struck in the second dog watch and the men off duty had gone below. There might be the flitting shadow of a man on the forecastle, but his naked feet trod with velvet softness; the dim and drowsy rumble of a human voice past the galley, as of a sailor delivering a yarn with heavy, half-closed eyelids, seemed to deepen to the ear the preternatural stillness that came floating through the gloom to every sense, off the wide invisible surface

of the sea, like something determinable by the faculty of hearing.

I walked the deck with Captain Christian till three bells had been struck—half-past nine. I cannot imagine that any mariner should be able to tell a sea story more humorously and drily than he. He had used the ocean for years, had filled every grade, from the position of boy to that of commander, had visited parts of the globe much less familiar to mankind in those days than in these, had a score of briny experiences to regale one with, and was as profitable a companion to listen to as any man could desire to be thrown with. But at three bells his servant put the grog upon the table; he caught sight of the decanter and glasses through the open skylight, and proposed that we should go below and proceed with a game of chess that we had started on a day or two previously.

Hot it was in the cabin, though there was the heel of a windsail to breeze down over our heads, and with every light lee and weather roll of the ship there entered a gush of cool, dew-laden night air through the open ports. The captain and I sat with our eyes riveted upon the chess-board. He held a large meerschaum pipe between his teeth and a tumbler of ruddy wine was at his elbow. Nothing was audible but now and again the dull creaking sounds of cargo straining in the hold, or a yearning gurgling of water, sounding like a giant's sob, through an open porthole, to the stoop of the ship upon the gentle inclination of the soft, half-breathless swell of the sea. Suddenly my attention was attracted by the head of a man staring through the open skylight. It was the red-headed second mate.

"Below there, sir!" he quietly called.

"What is it?" demanded Captain Christian, expel-

ling a cloud of smoke, without lifting his eyes from the chess-board.

"There's a strange, faint sound, sir; away on the sea off the starboard bow it seems."

"Sound, d'ye say?"

"Ay, sir; a faint dribble of noise."

"What's it like?" asked the captain, keeping his eyes glued to the chess-board.

"Why, it's like the voice of a woman singing, sir," answered the second mate.

"Very odd," I exclaimed, starting.

"Anything in sight, Mr. Jansen?" exclaimed the captain, now cocking his winking eye up at the skylight as he asked the question.

"Nothing, sir," answered the second mate. "But then, sir, 'tis as thick as thunder all round."

"Well," exclaimed the captain, "if the noise continues or approaches let me know," and with that he drew himself together, as it were, with first a long pull at his glass and then several contemplative puffs at his pipe, to consider afresh his next move on the chess-board. A few minutes later Jansen's head showed again.

"It's, for sure a woman singing to starboard upon the sea in the heart of the gloom, sir," he exclaimed, his Scandinavian harshness of pronunciation accentuated by excitement. As he spoke, the mellow chimes of the ship's bell struck five times to indicate half-past ten—floating pleasantly from forwards, the softer for the silken, plume-like flap of some square of canvas slightly hollowing in to the leeward heave of the ship. The captain emptied his glass, put down his pipe, and went on deck. I followed him.

The night lay the blacker against the sight, for the

contrast of the cheerful lamplight in the cabin, but after a little one saw a star or two trembling between the squares of the rigging and the ebon line of the ocean in the west, where there was a sort of faintness in the sky, with a keener gleam in the luminaries there, as though wind was coming from that quarter. We went to the starboard rail a little before the mizzen rigging and listened. The second mate in a minute cried, "There, sir; d'ye hear it?"

"I caught it," said I.

"Yes," exclaimed Captain Christian, "a twang as of a Jew's harp. What is it?"

But my younger and perhaps finer ear found something very different from *that* in the thin, apparently distant sound. It was a woman's or a boy's voice lifted fitfully in song. It came and went, and came and went again whilst we might have counted twenty, bending our ears with breathless attention to the black water whence it proceeded. The captain called to his servant to hand him up a binocular glass, with which he patiently and carefully swept the water from the cathead to abeam.

"I see nothing," he exclaimed.

"Hark! Hear the voice again!" I cried.

"Ay, and by the bones of my grandfather it is a voice too! A woman's voice, and we're nearing it or I'm very much mistaken," cried Christian, in accents that trembled with astonishment. "Wheel there!" he bawled. "Let her come to."

In a few minutes the voice sounded again, this time seemingly close aboard, and, as one might judge by the sound of it, almost ahead. I leaned over the side, seeking to pierce the obscurity, but to no purpose. There was nothing to be seen.

"Quarter-deck, there!" shouted a rough voice from

the forecastle; "there's a woman singing just off the bow here, sir."

"D'ye see any signs of what she's aboard of?" shouted the captain.

"No, sir," answered the look-out; "only a minute ago I thought I caught sight of a sort of blot that might be a ship's boat—but I don't see anything of it now."

As the echoes of the seaman's gruff voice died away in the canvas aloft, the sound of a woman singing upon the water again arose. Nothing wilder and stranger could be imagined. The darkness of the night put such a quality of mystery and awe into the strange, tuneless, sighing utterance, that one listened to it as to a spirit.

"Can't be a fish," cried the captain. "We shall be into it in a minute, whatever it is. Get your topsail to the mast, Mr. Jansen. Smartly, now. Here's a job that must be looked into."

Again the wild and plaintive notes came floating off the water, with startling distinctness now. The naked feet of the watch slapped the deck as their shadowy forms fled from rope to rope. Delicate as was the breeze, our progress to it, so clean was our clipper keel, had been some fair three knots in the hour; but the backing of the yards on the mainmast instantly arrested the vessel's way, and her pallid spires waved under the dim stars as restfully as though she had been at anchor. The sailors overhung the sides staring; we who were aft looked too with all our eyes, but the obscurity was impenetrable; it pressed black to the white sides of the ship, and it was like gazing into a well to glance over the rail.

"Get blue lights up, Mr. Jansen, and see what's to be revealed in the space they throw out."

In a few moments a couple of port-fires were pouring their brilliant showers into the night, one at the fore rigging, the other a little abaft the main. They flashed up a wide surface of water. The ship trembled out phantasmally to the glare, and the seamen, with their fire-touched eyes and phosphoric outlines, looked like a crew of fiends aboard some hell-born craft. Clear in the blue dazzle under the bows within a biscuit toss, there showed the ink-like fabric of a boat with a slender fibre of mast upright in her, but without sail, and in the stern of her the figure of a woman grasping the hair that flowed down her breasts with both hands, and staring at the ship in a motionless posture, save for the heave of the boat upon the under-running folds. Exclamations of wonder broke in a sort of groan from the men.

"By Heaven! but it's a thing that don't seem lucky, though," cried the captain.

The port-fires burnt out, and the ocean plunged into darkness as opaque to the vision as the night to the eye after a flash of lightning. Instantly the singing recommenced. There was no melody, no meaning in the notes. It was as if a little child sang to her doll, the voice being a woman's.

"Mr. Jansen," cried the captain.

"Sir?"

"Get lanterns along. Stand by with another port-fire, and send some hands aft to the quarter-boat here."

The commotion, such as it was, had aroused the watch below. The tall, black-bearded mate had risen like an ostrich through the companion-hatch, and most of the ship's company were now on deck. The excitement of this incident had got a strong hold of the men, and with man-of-war-like promptitude there were

lanterns flashing in the gangway, a port-fire sparkling and hissing over the forecastle rail, and the *Lady Charlotte's* starboard quarter-boat in the water, urged by four rowers in charge of the second mate, to where the black form of the mysterious little fabric showed. The blue glare spread a broad circumference of ghastly sheen over the water, in the midst of which we could see our boat approach the other, and then make for the ship. Once more the port-fire expired, and the blackness rolled down to us like a thunder-cloud again, but there were lights enough aboard us to direct the boat's crew, and we could very clearly discern their approach by the gathering brilliance of the phosphoric fires which flashed up under their lifted and falling oars, and girdled the boat like a band of emeralds.

"Have ye got the poor woman all right?" shouted Captain Christian from the gangway.

"All right, sir," came the answer from the second mate.

In a few minutes she was handed up on deck. She stood motionless on being released from the grasp which had lifted her over the side, saving her head, which she turned to and fro, staring from one lantern to another as if there was nothing worth looking at but the flames of them. The light was too puzzling, too thin, too conflicting, to enable me to view her with any clearness. All that I could distinguish was that she was a woman of the average stature, with a wonderful growth of yellow hair floating down over her bosom, whilst a portion of it was still confined to the back of her head by a comb. She looked to be clothed in a sort of dressing-gown. Her feet were naked, and in lifting her arm in a strange, flourishing way to her head, the sleeve fell and exposed the limb, white and polished

as ivory in the lantern light, bare to above the elbow.

"See her boat overhauled, Mr. Marling, will you?" exclaimed the captain; "and report whatever you find in her, and look for a name. Get the quarter-boat to the davits, Mr. Jansen, and swing the maintopsail. Mr. Furlong, perhaps you will accompany me and this lady below? Madam, allow me to lead you to the cabin."

She stared as though not understanding him, while she took her hair in both hands and flung it with a dramatic gesture over her back. She then laughed most piteously, and pointed to her lips with a shake of her head, following it on by clasping her hands in a gesture of entreaty.

"Thirst!" I cried. "For God's sake, dear lady, let us take you below."

I gently grasped her by the hand, and she walked with me without a moment's hesitation or rebellion. By the light that streamed through the open skylight I spied her staring at me, frowning and smiling all in a breath as it were, with a movement, as of whispering to herself, in her lips, over which she once or twice passed the knuckle of her forefinger. I retained her hand, going down the companion steps first, and the captain followed us.

"You will know this sort of suffering better than I, Captain Christian," I exclaimed; "she needs drink. How much should she have?"

The skipper, without answering, took a tumbler from a swinging tray, and half filled it with sherry and water. She watched him, smiling and whispering, and when he extended the glass she snatched it from him passionately and emptied it, then sank with

a deep sigh upon a locker close against the table, upon which she leaned her brow with a queer sort of unearthly sobbing at one moment, while she gazed down; then, glancing up at me, and from me to the captain, with a smile and an eye that was large and liquid, and of a dreadful beauty, as I now saw, with the feverish fire of madness that shone in it.

The captain's servant, swiftly obedient to the commands of his master, placed some food before her: beef, ham, white biscuit, and the like. She ate with hunger, but without the avidity with which she had swallowed the drink. She was haggard, hollow-eyed, her lips almost white, and the sufferings her face expressed were cruelly defined by the insane smiles which played over her mouth, and the burning light in her eyes. Yet many features of beauty stole out, and it was not hard to guess that when all was well with her, she was a woman of sweetness and of fascinating charms and graces. She had manifestly clothed herself in a hurry. Her fingers were without rings. Her hair was the richest in quality I had ever seen in a woman—of a ruddy auburn, and it floated like a sun-touched waterfall upon her back. From time to time she would start violently, and send a sweeping yet blind sort of look around her. Whenever her eyes met mine she smiled. Occasionally she would lay down her knife and fork and talk to herself, then re-address herself to her food with a sudden hurry and an hysterical lift of her eyebrows and a passionate heave of her full breasts.

Captain Christian waited till she had made an end of her meal to address her. He stared at her with curiosity and astonishment, with frequent glances at me. Her beauty, the meagreness and disorder of her apparel, the inanity of her smiles, and the brilliance of her

wandering eyes embarrassed the plain old sailor. He stood gazing whilst I waited for him to question her. Suddenly the long legs of our despairful chief mate showed in the companion way. He approached, cap in hand, and stood at the table viewing the girl carelessly, as though, as an incident of ocean life, she had already become commonplace through familiarity.

"The boat has been thoroughly overhauled, sir," said he. "There's the dead body of a sailor in the bottom of her; there's some ship's bread in the locker and in the stern sheets; but the breaker's empty."

"Sure the man's dead, Mr. Marling?"

"Stone dead, sir; cold and stiff."

"Can you tell me how this trouble came to happen to you, ma'am?" inquired the captain, addressing the girl respectfully, with even something of apprehension in his voice.

She had been staring hard at Mr. Marling, and did not seemingly know that the captain spoke to her.

"I fear her mind is gone," I whispered softly to the skipper. "She does not understand you."

She suddenly burst into a loud laugh full of madness, whilst she kept her fiery eyes fixed upon Mr. Marling. The tall mate turned of a deep red, and drew away from the table.

"Is this female's boat to be cast adrift, sir?" he asked.

"No," answered the captain; "if it's in good condition, tell Mr. Jansen to have it hoisted inboard. Get a couple of hands to secure a weight to the feet of the body, and let it slip quietly."

The mate went up the steps, and the girl followed him with another wild laugh as his long legs vanished. The captain asked me to try to coax her to talk to us. Possibly he noticed, as I did, that whenever her glance

met mine she smiled with a sweetness that seemed to soften, almost to extinguish, the lunatic gleam of her eye, whilst something like a quality of meaning and intelligence entered her white and haggard face. So far she had not uttered a syllable. But we might know that she was not dumb by having heard her sing. On my asking her name, she eyed me gravely, frowned and shook her head, and answered, "I don't know." I tried her with other questions: inquired if she could remember the nature of the disaster that had befallen her ship; how long she had been adrift; whether the man that was found dead had been her only companion; from what port she had sailed; whether she was English or Colonial, and so on, trusting by such inquiries to touch some chord of memory. She frowned, she shook her head, once the tears gushed into her eyes, often she smiled almost imbecilely, occasionally uttered a loud, inconsequential laugh, and had nothing to answer but "I don't know," or, "I cannot tell who I am," and then she would smile again, and once she whipped round upon Captain Christian, and in a voice that rose almost to a shriek, called out, "I am dead; but that poor fellow could not tell a spirit if he saw one!" She gave a short loud laugh as she said this, then rose and was walking in an aimless way to the companion ladder, when I lightly put my hand upon her shoulder.

"You must rest," said I; "you are in good hands here. You will be conveyed safely to your friends. Your sufferings have been terrible, we cannot doubt; but all is well with you now."

My voice was broken by my sympathy for the poor, sweet creature. She looked at me with a smile of plaintive, most winning gentleness, and extended her hand, which I took.

"She seems content to make a friend of you, Mr. Furlong," said Captain Christian. "Sit with her, will you, sir, whilst Tom"—meaning his servant—"puts a mattress and blanket into the bunk in the cabin alongside yours."

She was as my shadow in willingness to move as I moved. She returned with me to the locker and would not let me take my hand from hers. This action marked a species of intelligence which was irreconcilable with her babble. She talked to me with the incoherence of one who speaks in a dream. She began a story, and I bent my ear eagerly, but there was not a sentence of meaning in what she said. Meanwhile she continued to hold my hand whilst she drew the fingers of the other down her hair or pressed her eyelids, as though to some internal struggle. I caught her looking yearningly at the swinging tray, and interpreted her eyes and asked Captain Christian to give her some sherry and water. It was what she wanted, and she swallowed the contents of the glass with a sort of frenzy, but she was manifestly incapable of giving expression to her desires.

The cabin was soon prepared, and I conducted her to it. There was no light in the berth, but the cabin lamp yielded illumination enough to enable one to see very clearly. There were two bunks, one above the other, and it was the lower one that had been prepared for her. I lingered a minute on the threshold, fearing that she might be at a loss, and somewhat embarrassed, and not a little touched too, by her eager, clinging hold of my hand. I pointed to the bunk, and begged her to lie down, and to my great relief, on a sudden she understood, and wrapping her gown about her, extended her form, with her face to the wall of the ship, and lay motionless. The scuttle was closed, and the room was

hot, so that what she rested in was covering for her in abundance, though before leaving her I lightly drew the blanket over her bare feet, and paused another moment to listen with satisfaction to her regular respiration.

I then closed the door and returned to the captain, who sat at the head of the cabin table pulling at his great pipe with a face full of puzzlement, with the tall mate standing alongside poising a nor'-west draught of rum and water betwixt his eyes and the flame of the lamp, for it was now drawing on to eight bells, midnight, when Mr. Marling's watch would come round, and a tumbler of grog was better to him, I dare say, than a brief, unsatisfactory spell of sleep. Well, the three of us sat talking of this poor girl, for she was little more—scarce twenty years old, I reckoned, spite of the whiteness and mad, smiling, pitiful expression that lay like a mask upon her features, conjecturing all sorts of things of her and wondering how her condition of suffering and horrible loneliness had come about; but speculation was idle in the face of the darkness of her craziness.

"It seems strange," Captain Christian said, "that there should have been but a single dead body in company with her. When that boat had shoved off there must have been other sailors aboard. How happened it, then, that a delicate young woman should have weathered a number of brawny sea-toughened Jacks?"

But here Mr. Marling broke in, in a hollow voice which fitted well with his despairful countenance, "Captain Christian, sir; a woman'll bear more'n it would take to kill off forty sailors."

"Right," said Captain Christian, "ye may know that by the illnesses they suffer and live through. Pity there's no female aboard. Who's to nurse the poor girl? To-morrow may find her with brain fever."

"I'll nurse her," said I.

"So you shall, Mr. Furlong, so you shall, sir," he exclaimed; and I saw his winking eye lift with an instant's gleam of merriment in it to the face of the mate. "She'll make a pleasant playmate for you, sir, superior for a long sea-voyage as a diversion even to chess, damme."

The long mate uttered a laugh like the low of a calf, finished his grog, and went leisurely on deck, whence presently floated the clear chimes of eight bells.

When I went to my cabin I heard the girl next door to me singing. Her voice was sweet, but the sounds she uttered tuneless. They were of a piece indeed with her talk. 'Twas more crooning than singing perhaps, and she would stop to babble and to laugh aloud; but by one o'clock there was a dead hush with her, and though I lay awake for a long while, all remained still as death in her cabin.

III.

WE got a breeze from the westward that morning some while before it was daybreak, and the *Lady Charlotte*, under main-royal and flying-jib, was thrusting through it brilliantly when the sun rose; all to windward, as I saw through my scuttle, being a dazzle of blue and frothing ridges under the risen sun, with a frequent leap of froth to the glass of the window that made it blind with weeping, and such a slope of the deck that it was like the roof of a house for shaving on. I knocked at the girl's door, and obtaining no answer, entered and found her sitting in her bunk with her feet on the deck,

seemingly counting her fingers. She instantly smiled on seeing me, and extended her hand. I was no doctor, but I could tell the difference between a febrile and a composed pulse, and on pressing her wrist I found her heart beating a little swiftly, but with regularity. It was impossible to know whether she had slept; or, if she had obtained rest, to guess whether it had benefited her or not. Her eyes shone bright with the sparkle of madness and the swift manifold changes in the expression of her face conveyed her condition with startling emphasis.

I sent the captain's servant for some warm water, and fetched from my own cabin such toilet conveniences as she might require. I then bathed her feet, which I clothed in a pair of slippers of my own, and gave her a comb and brush, believing she would adjust her own hair; but she merely looked at them without attempting to apply them. On this I got her on to a little locker near the door and brushed her hair, and coiled the glowing heap of it away under the comb as best I could. It was very lovely silken hair, soft as swan's-down to the touch. In other ways I sought to infuse a sense of comfort and refreshment in her, and I noticed that I never moved away from her but that she followed me eagerly with her burning eyes, and that our gaze never met but that a smile of sweetness and beauty, with a sort of dim intelligence in it too, lighted up her pallid, hollow face. She would occasionally speak to me. Her remarks were without meaning or relevancy. I answered them, nevertheless, to humour her, and when I had made an end of her toilet, such as it was, I begged her to lie down, motioning to the bunk, and saying that she would be better presently, that she had come through a frightful time of privation and mental anguish, that

she must go on resting and being nursed until her strength returned to her, and the like; but she understood nothing of all this saving my gestures, which she obeyed with a tender and pathetic alacrity, lying herself down and regarding me with a singular kind of wistfulness, as though she would ask for my approval.

I thanked God that her madness left her tractable, at all events, if not to others, to me at least, for it rendered my task of looking after her comparatively easy. I cannot express how much I was touched by her loneliness, by her friendliness, that was the wilder and more defined because of the intellectual darkness into which her being had been plunged by the horror and suffering of shipwreck, and by the many signs of girlish beauty which shone forth in her shape through the comparative squalor of her attire, and through her face that was bloodless with hardship, and mocking and hollow-eyed with the hours of anguish that had worked in her.

I fetched some breakfast with my own hands from the cabin table. She drank feverishly of the tea, but I had some trouble to persuade her to eat. I then bade her lie still and take thorough rest, and asked if she understood me. She closed her eyes, as a child might, as though it was the best possible sign she could give me, and then I shut the door upon her and joined the captain at the breakfast-table, impressed and rendered hopeful for the poor girl by the sudden, infantile gleam, so to speak, of rationality.

Mr. Marling and the skipper were at the table, and all our talk was about the stranger. I told them what I had done, how I had washed her feet, brushed her hair, and so forth; and the captain, smothering a laugh that rose purple to his face, told me to mind my eye, for there were the makings of a handsome woman in

her, he fancied, and he could not satisfy himself that I was not of a highly romantic turn of mind.

"Pooh," said I, flushing up, "it's hard that a man should not be able to minister to a poor helpless woman in distress without standing to lose his heart."

"She's got a fine eye," said Mr. Marling, "it seems to enter a man's face and come out of the back of his head; and I tell ye what, Mr. Furlong, you may bet all you're likely to die worth, that the like of her hair isn't to be matched in a week's walk, starting from London town and heading as you list."

"How about dressing her, captain?" said I.

"Let her get well first," he answered. "Supposing she dies?"

"What's her clothes now?" said Mr. Marling.

"A dressing-gown," said I, "hastily slipped over a little underlinen."

"Let her get well, and we'll manage," exclaimed the captain. "We'll rig her out in the ship's number. The answering pennant 'll do for a scarf, and if she looks handsome in a dressing-gown, how will she show, think ye, in the glorification of many-coloured bunting?"

Shortly after this we took the first of the south-east trades. The weather grew cooler; a long blue sea came brimming in foam to the port bow of the *Lady Charlotte*, the flying-fish whisked in flashes of mother-of-pearl from the ruddy shadow of her metal sheathing; the universe of heaven and waters was filled with life by the singing of the gay wind that came musical from the far distance with the fountain-like murmurs of the rolling horizon.

Most of my time was devoted to the girl, who was as yet nameless amongst us. The change from the frizzling atmosphere of the stagnant parallels to the fresh and

pouring sweetness of the south-east trade gale helped her, as I was able to see. She was too weak to leave her cabin, but the little room was filled with the sweep of the wind through the open scuttle, to which her hair danced like fireflies, and to which her bosom rose and fell as though to an emotion of exhilaration. Yet she continued without her mind, her eyes retained their startling glow of insanity, her speech was incoherent; and, struggle as I might, I could interpret nothing out of her confused, irrational utterance that shed the least faintness of light upon her past. She looked to me to be a girl of a little less than twenty; her skin was very delicate, her profile with something of fairy daintiness in the moulding of it, her ears small and of great beauty, her eyes a soft melting brown which, brilliant as they now were with distempered reason, contrasted formidably with her pale hair. Her shape was faultless. Her utterance was cultivated, but it was impossible to note any special qualities of breeding or refinement in her senseless prattle. I would notice that her gaze followed me wherever I moved. She was perfectly obedient to my wishes, and from no other hand would she take drink or food. I asked the captain's servant once to carry her dinner in to her, and when I looked in upon her an hour later, I found she had not taken a bite or sup; yet, on my putting the plate upon her knee, she ate at once. Maybe it was my real sympathy with her that had penetrated to her woman's heart through the shell, so to speak, of her madness. Captain Christian sometimes looked in upon her, but, after taking a peep at him, she would turn her face to the ship's wall and sing to herself, as if vexed.

"Well, well," he would say, laughing, "take my word for it, Mr. Furlong, she's not so daft as you think

her. She's quick to signal an ugly face, and to show her feelings. Now, if she had clean lost her mind, how would she know that my nose was broke, or, for the matter of that, perceive the difference 'twixt you and me?"

Well, it was two days past a fortnight since we had first fallen in with her. It was a wildish day—blowing strong; the sea a huddle of pea-green hills shouldering one another as they came creaming to our side, and dissolving in broad dazzles of snow away to leeward. The ship was under double-reefed topsails, and there was a hard weather look in the damp grey of their rounded bosoms, and in the archings of the black rigging, in the gush and buzz and gleaming shadow of the water in the scuppers, in the figures of the seamen shining in oilskins, in the dark curve of the foretopmast-staysail saturated mid-high, in the low flying of the smoke from the galley chimney, and in the occasional flight of a burst of froth over the weather-rail, making a space of air hoary against the rushing slate of the sky above the bows.

I had smoked out my pipe under the lee of the weather bulwarks, swinging in a coil of gear from a belaying pin, whilst I chatted with the second mate, inside of whose sheep-faced head there was crowded a deal of marine matter, that gathered a true oceanic flavour from his hoarse delivery of it, and from a plentiful use of seafaring terms. The wet in the wind put an edge of cold into it, and I stepped below mainly to see how my patient did. When I had last looked in upon her, about two hours before, she was asleep, with one white arm overhanging the edge of the bunk, and her hair flooding the pillow and her cheek, like a space of sunshine. It was seldom my practice to knock, simply because she never gave any answer to that sort of

inquiry. I turned the handle softly, and found her sitting up in her bunk with her hands clasped, and her feet on the deck, and an extraordinary expression of puzzlement and astonishment on her face. The instant I got a sight of her eyes, I knew that her mind had returned to her. The feverish light was gone; there was a high and new intelligence, but filled with dismay and amazement in her regard. No unmeaning smile made her face pitiful to the encounter of our gaze.

She said, in a sort of breathless way, "Where am I?"

"Ha!" cried I, "you shall learn all presently. Thank God the ugliest feature of your illness has vanished."

"Do not I know you?" she exclaimed, looking at me earnestly; "you seem like one that I have dreamt of, that I have met again and again in dreams."

She pressed her hand to her forehead, still staring at me. Her manner was full of agitation, though her voice was peculiarly sweet and gentle. I saw her run her glance over her dress, then at her feet, and then lift her hands to look at them. Her astonishment was really a kind of terror in her, and I judged it would be wise in me to relate her story, since she had now her senses, and might gather something soothing in perceiving how matter-of-fact after all was the incident of our falling in with her and taking her on board. There was little enough to tell, and I had soon made an end. She listened to me with a surprising look of bewilderment, her eyebrows lifted, her lips parted, her hands as restless as if she were in physical pain.

"That's the story," said I. "Your sufferings occasioned a little eclipse of the mind; but you are now well again, and will be better and stronger yet after a little."

"You found me in an open boat with a dead sailor?" she inquired, breathing with an almost hysterical swiftness. "How was that? Where did I come from? Who put me into the boat?"

"Do you not remember?"

"I remember nothing," she cried.

"Think a little," said I soothingly; "it will all presently return to you. You can tell me your name?"

She fretfully bit her lip, frowning to the torment of her struggling mind, then shook her head. I was confounded by this new mental phase in her, and utterly at a loss. I wove a little imaginary story of her disaster with some fancy of stirring memory in her by an accidental flash of truth upon the darkness of her mind; put it that the ship she was aboard of had sprung a leak, and that she had been handed into the boat along with certain sailors of the vessel; that one by one they had perished, one or two of them being cast overboard on dying, another drowning himself in the frenzy of thirst, and so on; but to no purpose. I might as well have read out a page of Hebrew to her. Presently she cried a little, and looked at me with an expression of most passionate misery through the tears that filled her large dark eyes. I feared her brain might again become affected if I worried her with questions and forced her thoughts inwards into the hopeless blank there; so telling her in a cheerful manner that she would recollect everything presently, I changed the subject, spoke of our ship and where she was bound to, of the slenderness of her wardrobe, and that we must all now go to work to see how she was to be comfortably fitted out. I handed her from her bunk, and found that her weakness had in a great measure passed, and that she could walk with the support of my arm.

"It is time," said I, "that you exchanged this dull cabin for a livelier scene. The fresh air of the deck will serve you as a noble tonic. There is nothing in the matter of apparel to confine you here. I have been waiting for this happy moment to arrive, and am prepared for it."

With that I went to my berth and brought from it a warm dressing-gown, large enough to completely clothe her, along with a sealskin cap, and other articles of attire which she would be able to make use of. She received them in a mechanical manner, as though her faculties were almost paralyzed by bewilderment. I found Captain Christian in the cabin, and told him that the girl had recovered her mind, but that it had returned to her without memory.

"Mean to tell me she can't give you her name?" he cried, bringing his winking eye to bear upon me with a look of incredulity.

"She can recall *nothing*," I answered.

"Is it a matter of convenience, d'ye fancy, Mr. Furlong?"

"Oh, no. Her madness has been as a black curtain betwixt her past and her present. Memory may dawn in her, but just now she emerges from her suffering as though new-born, with no more knowledge of what she has left behind than the infant brings with it."

"Well, sir," said the skipper, "be her name what it will, I'll tell you what'll be the yarn to fit her case. She's a lady, isn't she?"

"She has a very pretty speech, captain. There's refinement in her voice, I think."

"You'll find," said Captain Christian, "that she was a young lady passenger aboard some vessel bound there's no telling where. Maybe she was with her

father or mother, or both. Whatever might have been the cause to send the people to the boats, it was something to make 'em bear a hand. That you may guess by the girl's dress. She whips on a dressing-gown, and rushes on deck into the hurry and confusion there; she gets separated from her friends, and is handed into a boat by some sailor, a true man. The rest is easily made out. The disaster 'll have been fire, sir. Perhaps her name will be on her linen, and the sound of it may serve as a flare to light up all the rest of what we want to know."

Well, after thus chatting for some time with the captain, I returned to the girl's berth, and found that she had equipped herself with the articles I had provided. Her own and my dressing-gowns made a warm garment. The sealskin cap lent an expression almost of archness to her pallid and still haggard beauty. She had dressed her hair with care, and stood leaning against the bunk in a posture as though waiting for me to come. She smiled on seeing me, as she had been used to do in her madness; but this greeting now was full of intelligence and of sweetness—of a nature whose qualities could express themselves without being deformed or shadowed in their deliverance. I at once asked if any portion of her apparel was marked by her name or initials. The question made her suddenly grave almost to tears. She answered, "Yes." She had looked for the sake of helping her memory, and had found J. H.

"Do those letters suggest nothing?" said I.

"Nothing," she answered, and she sucked her lip under her white teeth in a very passion of bewilderment and grief.

"No matter," I cried, "all comes to him who knows

how to wait, the French say," and putting her hand under my arm, I led her on deck.

It was blowing strong, as I have told you, and the long heave of the sea had a rhythmic regularity, and the ship leaned down and then pricked her spars afresh with a steadiness and certainty of action that made a very easy platform of the deck. On our passing through the companion, the girl holding by my arm came to a stand, and gazed around her with an air of astonishment. I saw her sweep the horizon with her dark eyes, and then run her glance forward and aloft, as one might indeed who had never seen the ocean or a ship before. I was staggered by this, for as it was certain, having regard to where we fell in with her, that she must have been on board ship for some weeks, and for all I could tell for some months, I had imagined that this picture of sloping spar, of shrieking rigging and dark and thunderous canvas, of the flying white shape of the clipper, with foam to the hawsepipes and the wash of yeast to windward, seething and hissing in yearning leaps, and rolling to the very covering board, would have proved the one familiar sight to have touched the chord of memory and to awaken it out of its silence into full music.

But not to dwell too long upon this special passage of my extraordinary experience. The days passed, gradually we drew towards the latitude of the Cape, the flying fish ceased to sparkle alongside, the atmosphere gathered a new quality of freshness. Presently we should be having our bowsprit heading to the southward and westward, with the mighty waters of the Southern Ocean under our bows, and Sydney a port to be talked about as if it were no longer very far off. The girl's memory remained impenetrable—a black

adamantine barrier. We speedily abandoned all attempts to induce her to recall her past. If the faculty were not absolutely dead in her, we had sense enough to see that it was stone-deaf to importunity, and that by prolonging our efforts to revivify it, we might come to tease and harass her into much such another condition of mind as we had found in her when we had first taken her aboard. As she was unable to give us her name, we had to invent one for her.

The captain said, "Her initials are J. H., so we must stick to them anyhow."

I said "Jenny is a pretty name."

"Jenny'll do first-class," said the captain.

"Let t'other name be Harlowe," said Mr. Marling.

"Why, Harlowe?" cried the captain.

"Well," said Mr. Marling, "I've got some books in my cabin containing an account of the love and injuries of an A1 copper-fastened young lady called Clarissa Harlowe. This young woman's a real sufferer as t'other one in my cabin was fanciful, and so I don't know that we could do better than Harlowe."

The skipper rumbled through a few names before adopting his mate's suggestion, and then said, "Well, Harlowe will do."

So we called her Jenny Harlowe, captain and mates addressing her as Miss Harlowe, and I being as ceremonious too before their faces, though when alone with her I called her Jenny. She smiled sadly, with a forlorn, wistful look in her eyes when I told her that as we were unable to get at her real name we had invented one for her.

"Strange that it will not come," she cried softly, and knitting her brows.

It ended in my falling in love with her. It was

partly pity, partly delight in contemplation of her, partly our constant and intimate association, partly the fascination of the mystery of her own devotion to me. She grew beautiful as she gained in strength and health. Memory in her dated her life only from the hour of awakening to her senses on board the *Lady Charlotte*, and I would notice a preternatural vitality of light and intelligence in her eyes, as though they were quickened by the concentration in her recollected existence of the intellectual qualities which had animated her since her birth. I wish I had language to convey the subtlety of her devotion to me. She emerged, as it were, out of the eclipse of her soul into the perfect and ardent woman, every instinct virginal, of an exquisite innocence and purity of spirit, and so she loved me as though she were some faultless being of another world who, lighting upon this earth, gave her heart to the first mortal who searched her eyes with enamoured looks. God knows whether the sort of love she had shown me in her madness had stolen out of it into her sanity. I was sensible of an element in her devotion that came very near to adoration, which I would think of at times when alone as uncanny, when there occurred to me the fancy of it all having happened within a few weeks, with memory in her dark as the night, and a story of a life behind the veil which it formed as blank to her as it was real.

Captain Christian was not long in seeing how the land lay. One day at table, when we were alone, he said to me, "Excuse me, Mr. Furlong, but my eyes aren't mates if Miss Jenny Harlowe hasn't got ye taut in tow, as I expected she would. A lovely woman, mind ye—a form fit for a frigate's figure-head; but a lady that a chap with brains in his noddle would rather

go on walking round and admiring than sheer alongside of."

"Why?" I asked, feeling the colour in my face.

"Well, first of all, who is she?" said he.

"What does that matter?" I cried. "She tells her own story as far as her sweetness and loveliness go, and that's enough for me."

"Why, for just now, perhaps it is," said he, grinning; "but sweetness and lovabubbleness wear out, Mr. Furlong. They're like soft wood built ships, they're not lasting. A man wants more'n those two virtues, pleasing as they are, in a woman that he means to keep alongside of him all his life. Suppose Miss Jenny should be already married, sir?"

"Nonsense!" I cried, starting. "I doubt if she is nineteen years of age yet. Then, where's her wedding-ring?"

"Well, I don't mean to say that her having been a wife would be an objection in her," said he, "and for my part I'm of your mind, and consider her as a young vargin passenger in company with her parents, as I've before said. I think, if I were you, Mr. Furlong, I'd luff a bit and keep a trifle to wind'ard till the gloom in her mind cleared and allowed it to be seen through."

I laughed uneasily, with a toss of my shoulders, and exclaimed, "Well, we shall see," and then asked him if he would put me in the way of obtaining any sort of wearing apparel for her. "There will be needles and thread forward amongst the men," I exclaimed, "and are there no light stuffs aboard, of any kind, out of which we might manufacture a dress or two for her?"

He asked me to wait a bit longer. He hoped to be able to come at the right sort of thing presently. There was nothing on board likely to suit that he could think

of. He was only joking when he talked of making a gown out of bunting.

However, it was next day that, going on deck a little before noon with Jenny on my arm—for she walked with nobody else; she would not leave the cabin without me, nor remain on deck if I went below—I found the sailors backing our yards on the main. A stream of gaudy colours were flying at our mizzen peak. Right abeam, a little out of earshot, was a large ship, apparently an East Indiaman, with painted ports and green sheathing, the turbaned head of a Turk for a figure-head, monkeys in the rigging, starboard studding-sails boom-ended, and the canvas towering in cream-coloured spaces to little skysails—wan and delicate as star-touched gossamer against the bright blue of the South Atlantic sky. She made a bright and stately picture, with her jibs rounding like the pinions of huge birds to the great steeve of the huge bowsprit and long jib-booms, a crowd of redcoats on her forecastle, the tremble of women's raiment upon her poop, whilst from all parts of her deck would break gun-like flashes of light from bright brass and polished glass, as she stooped her massive bows to the light-blue folds, then lifting a breadth of her green copper forward with white lines of water racing down.

One of our quarter-boats was lowered and brought to the gangway, and down went Captain Christian into her, and was pulled over to the Indiaman. By means of a telescope I saw him mount the poop and enter into conversation with a square, purple-faced man, whose coat twinkled with gilt buttons and embroidery. A group of ladies and gentlemen gathered about them, and directed frequent glances at our ship through binocular and other glasses. Presently Captain Christian and the

crimson-faced man went below, accompanied by several ladies. It was hard upon half-an-hour before they returned. Captain Christian then making several polite bows to the company, disappeared in the gangway, and the head of his boat came rounding under the stern of the Indiaman, which at that moment was majestically filling upon her maintopsail, and beginning to slide through the floating heave of blue waters with a lift of foam whitening at her stem, and her studding sails smartly growing again into shapely and shadowless surface to the nimble dragging of the men upon the gear.

Our captain arrived alongside and sprang aboard; a stout bundle was passed up after him, the boat hooked on and hoisted, sails trimmed, and the *Lady Charlotte*, with dipping ensign, was striking once more for the deeper solitudes of the South Atlantic, with the tall canvas of the East Indiaman growing starlike in the blue atmosphere over the stern.

"Here now," cried Christian, as he pointed to the bundle, "is a proper wardrobe for Miss Harlowe. This is like keeping a man's word, I allow. Better than bunting or drill for dress, Mr. Furlong, and if the fit ain't up to the knocker there are huss'ifs enough knocking about forward, and I reckon," he added, with a grin at the girl, "that you haven't lost the art of flourishing a needle and thread, ma'am?"

We carried the parcel below. The ladies of the Indiaman had filled it very handsomely. Captain Christian had related to them the story of the girl in a plain, genial, seamanlike way, that had gone straight to their hearts, and he told us that, with a few exceptions, they had set to work to overhaul their clothes to see what they could spare. There were three good dresses, some shoes, a couple of hats, a shawl, a miscellaneous

lot of underlinen and the like. The mere sight of these things seemed to put a new heart into Jenny. Heaven knows whether there were any subtle stirrings of memory in her to understand by recollection of other attire the insufficiency and even the absurdity of the apparel of dressing-gowns and so on, in which she had heretofore gone clothed. Possibly the natural instincts of the woman quickened in her to the first glance at the dresses, which were good, and one of them very handsome, and at the embroidered petticoats and other articles. Needles and thread were borrowed from the men and for the rest of the day she kept her cabin, hard at work on the few alterations which she found needful.

Mr. Marling said to me, "If she's got no memory, how does she know how to use a needle and thread?"

"How does she know how to use a knife and fork?" said I; "in many directions the mind acts mechanically without reference to memory. Habit outlives the eclipse of the intellect. People who have lost their reason yet do many sensible things."

"Well, we are rum machines," said he. "I wonder how a man feels who can't recall? Useful to a chap who owes money, Mr. Furlong, perhaps; but put it t'other way about—I mean, let him be owed money, and I tell you what, not being able to recollect will be damned inconvenient."

IV.

JENNY looked a real beauty when she emerged next day dressed in one of the gowns which the ladies of the Indiaman had sent her. It was a black silk, little the worse for wear, and no better fit could be wished. It

matched well her rich fair hair and the delicate complexion of her throat. I observed a marked quality of respect in Captain Christian's manner towards her. Finding me alone in the cabin, he said to me, "Sir, she's a handsome girl, it cannot be denied. She wears her clothes like a lady. Sir, she might have a handle to her name for all we can tell. I can no longer blame ye, Mr. Furlong, for wanting wariness. Upon my word, there's something about her that's enough to make even an old Cape Horner like me reflective."

I was mightily pleased by this speech. Christian was a man whose hearty, honest character I had learnt to value, and what he had formerly said about Jenny had caused me many hours of anxiety and misgiving, though there was no falter in my resolution to make her my wife. Many a time I had walked quietly over to the boat in which she had been when we fell in with her, and which had been hoisted on deck and stowed near the long-boat, and minutely examined it, but to no purpose. Not the least hint was to be had from her of the name or character of the ship to which she had belonged. She had the look of a jolly-boat of those days, and might as easily have been lashed bottom up to the deck of a collier of a hundred tons as have hung at the davits of a ship of a thousand tons. The girl's underlinen yielded no clue save what was to be found in the initials J. H.

I remember that afternoon, that is to say, the day on which she came from her cabin dressed as I have described, taking her on deck and asking her many questions as we paced the white planks together. I interrogated her in a careless, off-hand way, and contrived to appear not in the least degree importunate, for I feared in her the little frown of pain that formerly

attended her efforts to answer me when her thoughts fell to groping in the darkness within her. But her memory was the same hopeless blank that it had been throughout. I slipped a plain diamond ring on to one of her fingers, and asked if she remembered ever wearing such things. She looked at it with a strained yearning effort of recollection that was indescribably plaintive, and then turning to me timidly, as though she feared a secret reproach in me, answered "No." She knew very well what it was, but she could not remember whether or not she had ever worn anything of the kind. Several other questions after this pattern I put to her, but her gathering distress warned me to desist. In short, life with her had begun at the moment when her madness left her. The light was all in front of the curtain; what lay behind was hopeless, impenetrable gloom.

The *Lady Charlotte* entered the magnificent Bay of Sydney and moored at the Circular Quay eighty-two days after she had lifted her anchor at Gravesend. I took rooms in a hotel in the neighbourhood of George Street, and forthwith went to work to provide Jenny with the many necessaries she stood in need of. At the expiration of a fortnight we were married. I will not pretend to say that I had given this step careful consideration. "When love deliberates the love is slight" says the poet. I was fascinated with my sweetheart's beauty and character. The mystery of our meeting and of our association flushed my young, ardent, and romantic mind with fancies in which I needed to have been very much older than I then was to find anything to excite a smile. The great and silent heart of the deep had yielded her to me as a spirit might descend from the broad expanse of blue to an earthly lover. Captain Christian and Mr. Marling were present at the

wedding. The ship was to remain three months at Sydney whilst discharging the freight she had brought with her from England and filling up with wool; and those weeks were a long and golden honeymoon with us. Her blankness of memory remained, but indeed, now that she was my wife, I ceased utterly to question her. I desired no knowledge of the past. What her antecedents were, what her name, her connection, the country of her birth, whatever her past might contain, in short, was as naught to me. The mere thought of even a slender ray of light floating over the black abyss of her memory raised a sort of jealous misgiving in me. She was the darling of my heart now, as I had her as she was, as I knew her, and I was satisfied that the dark curtain should be kept dropped, seeing how bright and glad was her life on this side of it.

We sailed from Sydney on the second of April, 1849, and nothing whatever occurred of the least moment until we were in about 120 degrees of longitude west heading a slanting course for the Horn. Down to this time we had encountered very agreeable weather, fresh, sparkling, favourable breezes, shining days, and nights of hovering silver, with the lazy wash of the Pacific under our counter and glimpses in the brilliant brine over the side of the fleet shapes of the bonito and the albacore. But now on a sudden the sky hardened in the south. From the horizon to the zenith the heavens grew of a dirty greenish-brown, ridged like a ploughed field and tufted as though with the presence of thunder. The chill of the Antarctic regions seemed to be in the short, moaning gusts which swept betwixt our masts. A sulky swell, but with something of ferocity in its weight and in the steadfastness of its hurl came rolling up from out of the dinginess abeam, and the blue of the sky to lee-

ward died out as though to a storm of desert sand sweeping over it.

The gale burst upon us in the first dog-watch. It was then pitch-dark. Some lightning flashed in the first sweep, as though the tempest kindled itself in a flame with the fury of its own speeding. However, Captain Christian had been eyeing the south all day, and knew what he was about. The first of the storm of wind found the *Lady Charlotte* under close-reefed fore and maintopsails and foretopmast-staysail. She lay down to the hellish discharge till the line of her lee bulwark rail was flush with the sea, then rose buoyant with a long, floating lift up the side of the great Pacific surge, and was presently making a noble fight of it, though smothered in flying foam, so that little more showed of her than the waving bands of her topsails, and the spars and rigging above madly shrilling to the smiting of the wind splitting with hurricane force upon rope and mast.

This weather threatened never to end. Day after day it continued to blow with astounding violence. The heavens were a dark, stooping, apparently motionless surface of a sort of sooty slate, along which there fled with incredible velocity, a wild yellow scud, of the colour of sulphur, in curls and feathers and veil-like lengths. The hills of foam under this gloomy background broke with a preternatural glare upon the eye in the day, whilst at night they filled the darkness with a dim, sepulchral, terrifying light of their own, by which, when the ship with naked spars rose foaming from the midnight billows, you could clearly distinguish her shape, and observe the poise of her clipper bows ere diving headlong down into the seething smother again. Hour by hour we drove northwards sweeping to leeward, with-

out an inch of headway, on the thunderous side of every gigantic surge that seized and hurled us beamwise towards the sun. For days and days my wife kept under hatches, and I visited the deck but rarely. The discomfort of the time was beyond expression. The galley fire was incurably extinguished, and there was nothing warm to be had. We subsisted upon vile tinned meats—and vile they were in those days—and had it not been for my having laid in a private stock of provisions, we should have had nothing to eat but this preserved meat and mouldy biscuit, a large proportion of which was richly flavoured with weevils.

I cannot recollect the latitude, but I know that we had trended very far north when the fierce gale broke. A gleam of blue sky showed to westward, and the wind, shifting in a sudden squall, blew a moderate breeze off the starboard bow, with a short, ugly, cross-swell, in which the tumbling and wallowing of the ship was most abominable. The change happened in the forenoon watch. By noon there was a great lagoon of soft Pacific heaven up in the north, with the sun glowing brightly in the midst of it, and masses of huge white clouds, prismatic as the insides of oyster-shells, settling in solemn procession away into the north-west. The skipper got "sights," but his face was as "long as a wet hammock," to use the sailors' phrase, when his calculations showed him that he had been blown leagues, and leagues, and leagues out of his course. However, the barometer was rising, the sea falling, the breeze came sweet and warm, though it put us on a taut bow-line, there was hot food to be had, and dry, sand-white planks to walk on. To be sure, it was a pity that the wind had not come off on the other bow, but a dead calm or baffling head-airs lasting a month would be welcome as

the light of the sun himself after the fury and deafening uproar of the maddened ocean, and the soul-subduing, motionless stare of the sky of sooty shadow and the headlong flight of sulphur-tinctured wings of vapour.

I had spent a couple of long hours of the evening in pacing the quarter-deck with Jenny. There was no moon, but many large stars trembled in the dark velvet betwixt the steam-coloured clouds, and their light touched her and made a vision of her face, with a sparkle of white fire in each dark eye, and a pallor of flesh that dimmed her red lips into a hue as vague as that of her hair. We talked of England, went over again the plans we had formed. She had no knowledge of any country. What she had seen and knew lay in the darkness behind her mind. She heard me name London, Paris, Vienna, New York—such cities as these, without a hint in her manner, voice, or face, to suggest that they were more than the idlest words to her. Sometimes I would imagine or perhaps hear a something in her articulation that made me suppose that she might be an American, or sprung at least from American parents, if a stranger to the country. Another time I would fancy a Scotch accent, scarce determinable, in her articulation. But I never questioned her. As I have said, I desired that her past should lie black in the grave of her memory. She had come through deep shadow, leaving all behind in impenetrable gloom, and had emerged into the clear and pure light, and had found me. Half the sweetness of her love for me lay in this thought of it. I was satisfied, and, as I have said, I asked no questions, made no effort to help her memory, shrunk, as from a fancy of barbarous violence, from the lightest thought of struggling to obtain a single peep behind the veil.

My wife went to her berth at a quarter before ten,

and I sat with the captain in the cabin until about twenty minutes to eleven, sipping at a small bowl of punch he had brewed in celebration of the improvement in the weather, and smoking with him. There still ran a snappish heave of sea, owing perhaps to the shouldering of the southerly swell into the north and west, whence the breeze was blowing. But the wind was without much weight. We were showing royals to it, and had the water been smoother the ship would have floated quietly enough through the shadow of the night.

The captain said, "Your health, Mr. Furlong. You're a different man from what you were when you first stepped on board us."

I drank to him. "I am," said I, "and in more senses than one, too. I am perfectly well in health, and I am married."

"It is not the first time that a wife has been found at sea," he exclaimed. "Old Ocean don't want much dredging to yield you wives, as well as other things more or less precious. But it's not often that a wife comes to a man out of the blackness of a dead calm, singing softly out of a straying mind, with ne'er a name to her back, and a life beginning as it were with a knowledge of the man she marries. I suppose you'll be living in England, Mr. Furlong?"

"Ay," said I, "we shall probably settle down near London."

"I shall drop in upon you," said he heartily.

"No living creature will be more welcome," said I.

We drank to each other again, then five bells were struck forward. Ten minutes later, I bade him good night and went to my wife's berth.

She occupied the top bunk and lay in a deep sleep. A small light was diffused by a bracket lamp that swung

near the door, and I stood looking at her for some time with the love in me for her stirred to its depths by the girlish and lovely tenderness of expression which the calm and hush of sleep had mingled with her beauty. I gazed, wondering whether her past ever opened before her in dreams. It seemed incredible that beauty which discovered so much power of mind as hers, even as she lay before me in peaceful unconsciousness, should be absolutely destitute of probably the most vitalizing influence of the intellect. Gently, that I might not disturb her, I fell to unclothing myself. Seated in my bunk, I was in the act of pulling off a boot when I was startled by a sudden, violent roaring of voices on deck. I heard some hoarse shouts followed by another wild roaring noise of human cries. What could it mean? There was anguish and terror in every note of it. The ship creaked drearily from her heart as she came to windward in a sharp, peevish lift to the underrun of some wolfish, hissing sea, and an instant after a blow resounded through her that was as though she had blown up or struck heavily amidships and split in two. A loud crying of men's voices rose again whilst the ship lay over, over, over; bowing down with a dreadful rapidity till her deck was like the side of a steep hill. I gripped at a stanchion and missed it and fell with the whole weight of my body against the bulkhead that contained the door. My head struck the hard timber and down I stumbled motionless and insensible as if my head had been laid open by a hatchet.

When I recovered my senses I was lying upon the deck with my head upon my wife's knee. She was incessantly bathing my brow with Hungary water. The cabin lamp was burning, and I opened my eyes upon her sweet and anxious face as she bent over me. For a minute

or two my mind remained abroad, but the memory of the thunderous blow that had heeled the ship over flashed upon me on a sudden like something seen by a fierce light, and I sprang as though electrified to my feet.

"Oh, dearest!" cried my wife. "I feared you were dead."

"How long have I been unconscious, Jenny?" I inquired, eagerly straining my ears as I spoke.

"I cannot tell. I have been too much terrified to know. Some serious accident has befallen the vessel, I fear. There was a deal of hurried rushing of feet overhead, and a noise of masts breaking, and faint cries as of people in a boat at some distance, and then this present stillness."

With lifted hand, as a demand for silence, I listened. The ship was lightly pitching; before I fell senseless she had been rolling. The straining sounds within her were very heavy; there was also a sloppy sort of noise as of near waters close to us, as though the wash of the surge came very near to the scuttles. I also distinguished in the movements of the ship, slight as they were, a sluggishness that was like a slow, but steadfast languishing into lifelessness, different indeed from the familiar buoyant lift and fall of the planks. All this I gathered in the space of half-a-dozen respirations, along with the sense of a dead stillness on deck; that is to say, I could not hear a human voice nor catch the dimmest footfall.

"Dress yourself, Jenny, as quickly as possible," I cried, "as completely as time will suffer. I will rejoin you in a moment or two," and within at least a couple of minutes from the instant of my recovery I was on deck.

The cabin lamp burned dimly. As I rushed to the

companion steps I spied the door of the captain's berth swinging to and fro. I sprang up the ladder and looked around me. It was still a dark night; the steam white clouds I had before noticed were trending in large masses north-west, and there were stars enough between to complexion the midnight atmosphere with a very delicate, dim sheen. The wheel was deserted, and revolved to left and right to the play of the rudder as the vessel gently pitched. All sail was set upon the main and mizzen, but forward was a mass of wreckage as though the bowsprit had been wrenched off, bringing down the foretopmast and all above it. I sent a loud shout along the decks, but received no reply. I ran forward, thinking there might be men past the barricade of wreckage, and when I had approached near to the galley I kicked against something soft and nearly fell. It was the body of a man, with another lying athwart it, and on the top of both was a huge, heavy fragment of spar that seem to have struck them down with one and the same blow. This dreadful sight filled me with unspeakable consternation, and I fled back to the quarter-deck, where I again raised my voice in an ear-piercing shout, but obtained no answer, not even an echo from the wind-hushed canvas.

We had carried a boat on either side; now, glancing at the davits, I found they were empty. I sprang past the wheel, and leaning over the taffrail saw what was called the captain's gig, a long slender boat which he used when in port, hanging at the irons there. I thanked God for the sight of it, for, landsman as I was—though by this time I could express myself in many nautical terms—I was perfectly conscious, from the peculiar sickly motion of the vessel, that she was draining water rapidly into her hold, and might sink in the beat of a pulse. I

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put my head into the companion and called loudly to Jenny. She was coming on deck as I cried out. She had completely though hastily clothed herself. I, you will remember, was fully dressed too, being in the act of taking my boot off when the sudden heel of the ship threw me.

"What has happened?" she cried.

"A collision no doubt," I answered. "The *Lady Charlotte* has been run into and is fast sinking. There are two dead bodies on the main-deck."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as though stabbed.

"The captain and seamen have abandoned her," I proceeded, "if one of the two bodies be not the captain. They must have forgotten us in the hurry of their flight, or believed us to be amongst them. The quarter-boats are gone. But the gig remains. See! it hangs there," I cried, pointing shadowily to the taffrail. "Jenny, whilst I clear away ready for lowering her, get you whatever provisions you can lay your hands upon in the cabin."

She ran below. I jumped into the boat and found a breaker in the bows. With this I sped forward as fast as my legs would carry me to the scuttle-butt that was lashed just abreast of the main-hatch. The metal dipper lay beside the bung-hole. I filled the breaker and cut away the dipper to serve as a cup, and rushed to the boat again and fell, with a large clasp-knife that I had purchased from the captain for the convenience of cutting up cake tobacco, to sawing through the lanyards of the gripes. I worked as though the ship was to founder in five minutes.

Jenny arrived with the lap of her gown filled with articles of food, all which she had met with in the little pantry adjoining the state cabin. I swiftly put the

articles into the boat, and observing that she had oars, mast, and sail in her, with a rudder and yoke in the stern sheets, I proceeded to lower her, I slacking away one fall whilst my wife let slide the other. Had the ship been in any other posture than almost head on to the sea the lowering of this boat would have been a very ticklish undertaking, perhaps impracticable to amateur hands such as mine; but under the counter the water rose and fell of an oil-like smoothness. I had sense enough to so thoroughly overhaul the falls, that the boat lay athwart under the stern as safely as if she were detached; then telling Jenny to climb over the rail into the mizzen-chains I slipped down one of the tackles, unhooked both blocks, got the boat alongside, helped my wife into her, and rowed a little distance away where we could take breath and yet be clear of the whirlpool should the *Lady Charlotte* suddenly founder.

I stood up to take a look around me, for the collision could not have long happened. The surviving boats must therefore be near, though it was possible that their inmates had been taken on board the vessel that had run into us. It blew but a light air, and she could not have travelled far, yet I searched the darkness in vain for any murky smudge upon the obscurity that might indicate her. It was a little after two o'clock, as I had noticed when running up the companion steps, and day would not break till about five. I resolved to linger near the *Lady Charlotte* till she foundered, conceiving that some of our people might be doing the same thing out in the unsearchable gloom round about, and that we might find companions therefore when the sun rose. The breeze was soft and mild, yet a chill would rise from the floating blackness of a near sea, which sent a shudder through one from time to time. Indeed, the

nearness of the ocean was a tremendous presence, and the huge, gloomy surface, or void rather, with its spectral glancings of pallid foam, seemed to sweep to the very throat with a sense of strangulation as the boat slid into a hollow, and hung a moment in it, with nothing to see save a star or two staring sparsely over the crests that stood up on either hand.

I held Jenny to my heart, and comforted her as best I could. It was about an hour after we had quitted the *Lady Charlotte* that she foundered. My eye was mechanically resting on her at the time, mainly because she supplied a break of deeper shadow to the monotonous continuity of the gloom of the horizon. The squares of her sails stood black as thunder-clouds against the masses of vapour rendered pallid by the starlight, and settling slowly up from the south-east, and her hull under them was like a line of snow upon the indigo of the waters. I was looking at her, I say, when she seemed to dissolve as a wreath of steam might. It was a sight and a shock to make my heart feel to stand still a moment or two. No noise attended her going, no sound of explosion, of rending planks or breaking spars. She disappeared as silently and as suddenly as a star behind a cloud, and the whole frightful solitude of the ocean came into one in a leap, as it were, and I felt Jenny tremble in the clasp of my arms.

I made up my mind, however, to linger till daybreak, and at last, after an interminable spell of waiting, the faint, pearly grey of dawn showed in the east, and then the wide field of ocean opened with a sudden lift of the sun's pink and flashing head into a fine weather sky of great white clouds, and blue heaven liquid, soft and glowing. There was nothing to be seen.

"No doubt," said I, "the ship that ran us down

took on board the people that got away in the boats. Would to God, Jenny, we were of them."

"Dearest, keep up your heart," she answered. "In what part of the ocean are we? to what place shall we endeavour to sail?"

I remembered what Captain Christian had told me of our situation on the preceding day by the first sights he had been able to obtain for a long while, and putting a chart of the South Pacific before me in fancy, I figured the place of our boat upon it and then perceived that our best chance would be in sailing north where the islands were, off one of which we might find a vessel willing to receive us. Unhappily, and I cursed myself for being guilty of such an oversight, in the hurry of leaving the ship I had come away without a compass. There was nothing to be done then but to steer by the sun or stars. I forthwith stepped the mast and hoisted the sail, and in a few moments the sharp-lined gig was buzzing through the blue surges, with the sun broad on our starboard beam, and the wind blowing warm and fragrant over the quarter.

V.

I WILL not dwell upon this passage of desperate and perilous navigation. I was no sailor, and was but ill acquainted with the art of handling a boat, and had the weather changed, had it come on to blow a fresh head-wind, in short, had there been any obligation of skill put upon me, we must certainly have perished. Happily, the mighty Pacific, upon whose dark blue expanse our tiny sail was a dash of light scarce bigger than the

pinion of an albatross, remained true to its name. The wind sat steadily in the south-east and blew us northwards, the heavens were piebald, the sun brilliant and hot; the brine underran us in curves of rich blue brilliance, the night sparkled with stars. I kept a wild and eager look-out for ships, but nothing ever hove into view. At times fits of dreadful despondency would overwhelm me, and had I been alone I believe I should have cast myself overboard. But the darling by my side was never weary in her efforts to keep up my spirits. It was wonderful indeed that she should have been able to win and hold my attention by her prattle, for prattle it was. She had nothing to talk about, no memory to fall back upon, no incidents of past life to relate. Existence in her had begun on board the *Lady Charlotte*, with me by her side; what then, you will ask, had she to say to interest me? Yet I was never weary of listening to her. She would take my hand and chat to me with her eyes upon mine, and infuse such hope and spirits into me that when silence fell between us at last, my heart beat strong as though to some tonic of potency. Sometimes I would fancy that this open-boat experience might revive in her the memory of what she herself had suffered in this way, and so lead to the revitalization of the faculty that lay dead in her. But no light shone, the torch remained extinguished. There was no disappointment to me in this. Indeed, any hint of memory stirring in her would, I am persuaded, have alarmed me. I should have accepted it as a menace to our love. It would have been like communicating the taint of earth to a gift from heaven. I knew I should think thus, though her past should be of an angelic beauty and purity; and the desire that the veil should be kept dropped between me and all that had

gone before our meeting was as keen a passion in me amidst the perils and distress of our navigation of the lonely little boat as ever it had been on board the *Lady Charlotte*.

It was on the morning of the sixth day that, being awakened from a short doze by the flash of the sun athwart my face as I sat with the yoke-line coiled round my hand, I lifted my chin from my breast and glancing drowsily ahead spied a little to leeward of the curve of the boat's sail a green cloud that looked to be resting on the sea-line on a narrow base of frosted silver. I rubbed my eyes to quicken their perception, and sure enough clearly distinguished the shape of what was apparently a small island swimming in the blue atmosphere as though viewed through a hot air. Jenny lay in the stern sheets sound asleep; her head was pillowed on her arm that rested upon the rail. I kissed her pale cheek vehemently in the sudden transport of joy which the spectacle of the island kindled in me, and she instantly opened her eyes and sat erect, smiling at me whilst she fondled my hand as though to thank me for the manner in which I had awakened her.

"Land, darling!" I cried, pointing.

She looked and exclaimed, "Oh, thank God. How have I prayed that we may be spared. Oh, dearest, we could not—we could not part."

I eased off the sheet of the sail, and directed the boat's head at the green and glimmering mass, and through it the little craft sped with a misty twinkling of flying fish on either hand from time to time, and a satin-white wake pointing arrow-like behind us. It was not until about two o'clock in the afternoon that we had brought the island close enough to enable me to distinguish it clearly. What had resembled frosted silver

in the distance was coral sand that stretched in a dazzle from the verdurous acclivities and flats in shore to the wash of the blue sea that glided to and fro upon it in small opalescent breakers. There was a great abundance of cocoa-nuts, and there were green hills apparently towards the centre, but of small elevation, along with a quantity of bush and a species of rank, tall grass, like to what is called Guinea grass. I could witness no habitations of any sort, nor discern the least signs of a ship, nor, for the matter of that, of human life. I scanned the horizon eagerly, but there was no more land in sight, in view at least from the low elevation of our boat.

I had read Commodore Wilkes's account of his expedition into these seas, and of the man-eating people he had found on some of the islands here, and I stared intently in search of anything that should resemble a black figure, having made up my mind, should the place be inhabited, to lie off till the darkness fell, then sneak softly ashore and endeavour to obtain a few cocoa-nuts, and so make off again into the north, where the islands would be plentiful, and where I might be sure of falling in with a ship or a trader of some rig or other. I asked Jenny if she could see anything stirring. She brought her glowing eyes to bear upon the island, and after a thorough search of it said "No." So I continued to head right in, and presently opened out a point of land that rounded into a sharp creek. The breakers flashed in spray against the point, and raised a little commotion in the mouth of the creek; but past this trifling flurry, that was too inconsiderable to cause me uneasiness, the water rounded into a surface of quicksilver. I made directly for this creek, keeping a thirsty look-out for savages, but, unless there was a community

of them dwelling upon the other side of this little green spot of land, it was unquestionably uninhabited. It stretched east and west about a league, but how far it extended towards the north I could not tell. The boat hissed and tumbled and seethed through the commotion on the bar, then floated steady as a spire on the polished, faintly green translucency with a breath of mild air fanning over the point to give her way to the extremity of the creek where we intended to go ashore.

All was quiet. Nothing stirred, if it were not some tufted head of cocoa-nut to the draught of air, or the dance of some plumed tropical plant, or a thrilling as it were of the long spike-like grass to the fingers of the wind. There was a hum of insects in the air, a distant hot chorus like to a twanging of many Jews' harps heard afar on a sultry day. I lingered, yet looking earnestly around, for I had heard of savages lying motionless in green ambushes until their unsuspecting victims had strayed some distance inland; and some of the old voyagers, such as Dampier, tell of stirless coverts with nothing living in them but the bright eyes of motionless blacks. However, it was impossible not to feel sure that the island was uninhabited, and, securing the boat's painter to a small cocoa-nut tree, I handed Jenny ashore.

My first business was to seek for fresh water. My wife desired to accompany me, but I said "No."

"I want you to keep watch here," said I. "Unfortunately we are without fire-arms, and we cannot signal to each other at any distance in case of danger. Should you hear me cry out, however, or see me running, you will be here to instantly cast the boat adrift and jump into her and put off. I could then take to the water, for I am a good swimmer, and so reach the boat. But I

fear no perils of any kind. Hark ! not a sound save the chirruping of insects. For all we know, this island may never before have received the impress of a human foot."

I saw hesitation in her sweet face. She was not afraid of being left alone, but of ill befalling me. But she made no objection, and to save time (for darkness rapidly follows upon sundown in these latitudes) I started in quest of what we should presently be greatly in need of. I walked a considerable distance along the shore, sometimes diverging inland, keenly watchful, but seeing nothing living, saving now and again a bird of radiant plumage winging, like a shape of gold, from the head of a tree towards the greenery of the hills, or at times a sea-fowl, like our own gulls, and once a frigate bird, dropping like a point of ink into the exquisite symmetry of its wide pinions out of the mottled heavens. I met with no fresh water, though I hunted diligently. The vivid green, however, of the inland parts was like a warrant almost of springs, and I did not doubt of coming across what I wanted next day. Meanwhile we had a little stock of water left in the boat, with yet a small store of food remaining, and here were cocoa-nuts in plenty to serve as meat and drink too, though I feared that the yield of the island in respect of food would stop at that unless we managed to contrive hooks and lines to catch fish with.

I slowly retraced my steps, noting with wonder and admiration the magnificent mass of the sun's disc, as he slowly sank towards the blood-red ocean—a huge, incandescent, palpitating globe. It made one think of being in another world to behold such a body of fire, so unlike the small, fierce, fiery, white luminary of the noontide. As I drew near to where Jenny was seated,

my eye was taken by a small rise in the land that rose clothed with green out of the broad stretch of white sand, and swept round like a bank past a group of cocoa-nut trees, whence running on for some fifty paces perhaps, it came to an end hard by a clump of trees which might have been palms for the graceful poising of their broad leaves and the lovely curves of their boughs. I turned aside to look at this rise, and found at the seaward end of it a large hollow chamber, clearly the work of human hands. It sank inwards about ten feet, but the orifice was as wide as any other part of it, and yawned demonstratively enough to invite rather than escape attention. The red light of the sunset flooded the interior. I called to Jenny that I had found a bedroom for her. She approached, smiling, and we entered the cave together.

It had doubtless formed some sort of human shelter in its time, whether for whites or blacks, but I met with nothing in it saving the decayed stock of an old fowling-piece, or of a firearm of more ancient pattern than that even. The walls and roof were of soil, hardened and toughened by vegetation. The floor was covered with a thick, stunted growth of herbage. I told Jenny that we would lie very peacefully there that night.

"We will spread the sail of the boat," said I. "Such rest as we can obtain here we both of us sadly need after the horrible crippling and constraint of the gig's stern-sheets."

"How long do you mean to stay on the island, Christopher?"

I told her that our business was to rest and refresh ourselves. I had not yet fallen in with any water, but I intended to devote the next day to having a good hunt. "The island," I added, "should also yield more food

than cocoa-nuts, though I have seen nothing in the shape of beasts, or vegetables, or fruit, to give me any hope in that way."

I felt sure, however, that there must be other islands lying close to the rim of the sea northward yonder, though out of sight down the curve of the horizon, and with a good supply of cocoa-nuts on board, we should have stores enough remaining besides, to warrant us against all risks of famine for some days to come yet.

She went to the boat with me and helped me to bring the sail to the cave, along with a little biscuit and meat and water for supper. I took care to haul the gig as far out of water as I could drag her, and carefully saw to the line that secured her to the tree. We then went to the cave, supped, and after offering up thanks to God for His fatherly watchfulness of us so far, we lay down on the sail and were very soon sound asleep.

All through the night we slept stirless, as we might know by our postures when we awoke in the morning, as though we had died when we first stretched our limbs. The sunshine awoke us ; we arose, went to the creek to see if the boat was all right, bathed our faces and hands in the sweet blue water that trembled in lines of silver against the coral sand, and then broke our fast. It was a very fair morning, the sky clear and soft from line to line, with here and there a pearly film of cloud that seemed in the act of melting. A light breeze blew from the south-east, and under the sun the water was shivered into diamonds by the mild caress of the soft warm breathing of air. Nothing was in sight on this side, whence I commanded a view of at least half the circle of the sea. I launched the boat afresh, and let her hang to the tree by her painter, as before, and then I fetched the sail from the cave and stowed it away in the little

craft, that we might want nothing that we possessed should the need arise for us to fly on a sudden. I next told Jenny to keep watch; should she spy any sign of a native, she was to leap into the boat, cast her adrift, and paddle out to sea, taking care to lie as near to the beach as she durst, and to wait for me, who would take my chance by dashing into the water and swimming to her.

I saw that she abhorred the thought of being separated from me, even for an hour; but, as on the preceding afternoon, so now, she acquiesced without a murmur. She came to me and took me in her arms and gazed at me a little while in silence, with an expression of passionate fondness in her eyes, kissed me again and again, and then with a smile full of love and beauty, walked to where a head of cocoa threw a shade upon the sand and seated herself.

With no other weapon than the light boathook belonging to the gig I started for the second time on a search for fresh water. I walked briskly to as far as I had gone on the preceding afternoon, then very leisurely, prying eagerly as I went. I had made up my mind to keep to the seashore for the present, and to search a long tract of it, for it was hard to tell what dangers the interior might be full of, and it was but fresh water that I searched for that might as well show in a little spring or stream past the cocoa-nut trees and still close to the sea as away inland. I saw no signs of life, saving several varieties of birds of handsome plumage; but presently, having passed a point of land that put the boat and my wife clean out of sight and that opened out before me a straight line of dazzling beach extending near a third of a mile as a dart might fly, I spied half-way down it the figure of a man standing facing the

ocean with his hand to his eyes as though he was carefully and deliberately sweeping the sea-line.

I came to a dead halt with an inward recoil, a sort of prompting to step lightly backwards in a breathless way and on tiptoe, as though forsooth he could hear my tread on the soft coral grit, and get the point of land betwixt him and me again; but my sudden consternation passed on observing that he was clad much as a castaway sailor might be—in a wide straw hat made of sennit, such as a South Pacific beachcomber would wear, a red shirt, and breeches of a dark material, blue cloth or dungaree. His feet were naked, and, unless he concealed a knife or pistol in his breast, he was unarmed. I stood for some moments watching him intently, for the atmosphere had the brilliance of the object-glass of a telescope, and many paces distant as he was, he stood in colour, attire, and all other details as plain to my sight as though he were within a few yards of me. There was a slight stoop as of weariness in his shoulders, yet he showed out against the clear sapphire of the distant sea and the white atmosphere gleaming off the beach past him in the proportions of a powerful and muscular man, six feet in height I dare say.

His head turned slowly round my way as he stealthily ran his gaze along the horizon, and then all at once he saw me. His hand fell from his brow and disclosed, as I seemed to distinguish, a sunburnt face, shaggy with a considerable growth of tawny beard and moustache. He stared, as I stared; at first walked towards me staring afresh as though discrediting his senses, then paused, staring like a lunatic all the while; then in a sudden hurry he broke into a run.

“Are you English?” he cried.

“I am,” I answered.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "when did you come? Where are you from? Are there more of you? Where is your ship?" and he whipped out with these questions one on top of another, whilst he thirstily stared past me at the sea as though to discover the vessel in which I had arrived.

I now observed that he was a very handsome man, his cheeks somewhat lean indeed with privation, but his eyes were uncommonly dark and pleasing, of a very deep blue, his teeth white and regular, his hair of a rich auburn.

"Have you been here long?" said I.

"Hard upon three weeks, I reckon," he answered. "Gracious powers, what a time it has been!"

"Are you alone?" I asked.

"Ay, ay," he muttered, "as much alone as if I were in my grave. And you?"

"I have a companion," I answered.

"One only?"

"One only," said I.

"O God!" he cried in a tone of despair, "is there no vessel round the corner yonder then?"

"We arrived here in a little open boat," said I, "and we have that boat still."

"An open boat!" he exclaimed, "well, thank God for it!" and a light came into his eyes as he spoke. "We may make shift with that. There are countries enough out there," and he indicated the north with a sideway gesture of his head, "where there are whalers to fall in with mayhap or schooners from the western American seaboard. These are smooth sailing waters, sir. When did you come?"

In reply to this question I gave him my story as briefly as intelligibility permitted. All the time that we

talked we stood without moving a pace one way or the other with the point of land between us and where my wife was keeping watch. I asked him if there was any fresh water on the island. He answered plenty. There was a noble little waterfall half-a-mile distant inland from where we stood. He offered to conduct me to it. I told him he should a little later on.

"What supplies of food are to be had?" I demanded.

He answered nothing but cocoa-nuts, a few kinds of roots, and a wild fruit of an acid but agreeable flavour, that was to be obtained in quantities upon the western slope of the hills.

"Well," said I, carefully inspecting him whilst he talked, and wondering if he concealed any weapon upon him, and if he was to be trusted, and whether he might not turn out to be some blood-stained sailor, some piratical villain, despite his handsome face, who had been set ashore, to perish, by his comrades, "we must make shift to stock the boat with what we can pick up. Our stores which remain are very slender indeed."

And then I asked him his name and what brought him to this miserable pass, and all the while we continued standing without moving a pace as we talked, for, to speak the truth, I was animated by a peculiar secret repugnance to taking him to where my wife was. It was a feeling I could not account for nor even understand. Maybe I wanted to learn more of him before I carried him to my wife. The instincts born of the civilization of cities operated in me in that lonely Pacific island as they might in a street of London or Paris; and I hesitated to admit this stranger to a sight of Jenny as I should have scrupled to introduce into my drawing-room at home a man of whose antecedents and position I knew nothing.

"Where does your boat lie?" he asked.

"In a little creek some distance away round that point yonder," I answered.

"We will walk to her," said he, "and I'll tell you my story as we go."

With that he stepped out, and we walked together but leisurely, for he moved as one who was somewhat weak from want of proper nourishment.

"My name," he began, "is Jonathan Harness. I was captain and part owner of a little barque called the *Mary Anstruther*. We sailed from London at the close of August in last year, and all went well with us till we were in some six or seven degrees south latitude, when a couple of drunken villains of sailors, entering the hold with a naked light to broach one of a heap of rum casks stored below, set fire to the ship. We were bound to Callao with a general cargo, a good deal of which was light, inflammable stuff, and when the cry of fire was raised, I seemed to feel as though the vessel was doomed, as a man gets to know inwardly that he is bound to die within a certain time, though they may tell him that there is plenty of hope and that his complaint isn't deadly. All that *could* be done *was* done; but the fire quickly took a strong grip, and the forepart of the hold was presently in a blaze, with the smoke dribbling up and gathering in a sort of thunderstorm upon the ship, and a glare like lightning upon it now and again from the leap of a crimson tongue of flame. I had my wife on board with me. I secretly called aft three good, trustworthy seamen, quietly got them and my wife into one of the quarter-boats, and told them to lie off ready to receive me should I hail them. It was ten o'clock at night, I must tell you, when the fire broke out, the weather almost a calm, and the air dark though starlit.

I bent the end of the boat's painter on to some running gear, and paid out the line plentifully overboard, that the boat might have scope to lie hid away out in the darkness out of sight of the sailors who were toiling with hose and pumps and buckets. The quarter-boat had not long been lowered when a fresh breeze of wind suddenly sprung up right abeam. You heard the flames roar again as the ship gathered way, for the yards lay as though trimmed for that slant. The ship was fated, I saw that ; we toiled on a bit, then all hands were seized with a panic of fear, and rushed aft in a body to the boats, of which we had two remaining. I sprang on to the quarter and shouted, straining my eyes into the atmosphere that was yellow with the light of the burning ship a long distance the whole way round, but heard nothing and saw nothing. It was blowing fresh, the ship was whitening the water as she swept through it with a fellow at the helm jamming the wheel hard a starboard to bring her to, that the boats might be lowered. I seemed to be able to follow the line that had been secured to the boat's painter to the end of it, where it followed in the arching wake like a black serpent out on the sulphur-like water. Well, sir, to shorten this yarn, the boat had gone adrift ; I had lost my wife, and I could have flung myself into the burning hold of my vessel in my misery and grief."

A sigh broke from him with a sort of half-choking sob in it. He came to a stand to pass the sleeve of his shirt over his streaming forehead.

"Ha !" cried he, with a sudden glee coming into his face and pointing ; "I see your boat, sir. Oh, my God ! it is a sight I have been praying for during my imprisonment here."

He brought the sharp of his hand to his brow and

peered again. The figure of Jenny seated under the cocoa-nut tree was as visible as the form of the gig in that exquisitely crystalline atmosphere, but she was still a good long walk from us.

He continued peering a little, and exclaimed, "Your companion is a lady!"

I answered, "Yes," in a low voice.

"Your wife?" he inquired.

"My wife," I answered quickly.

"Alas, poor lady!" he said. "Shipwreck falls heavily upon women, sir; but no matter. A little patience. There are ships out yonder," pointing northwards, "and—and——" he broke down here to some sudden rush of thought in him and grasped my hand. His eyes were dry, but there was a broken-hearted sound of tears in the brief stammer which had brought his speech to an end.

I remained standing whilst he stood, viewing him in silence. On a sudden he plucked up and we started afresh.

"To finish my story," said he, "the fire beggared me in my heart and in my purse as well, for I had lost my wife, and my venture in the vessel was uninsured. I got into one of the quarter-boats and besought the hands in her to make a search for the boat containing my wife; but they grew hellishly mutinous in a breath on hearing that three of their number had been told off to ride astern in safety in a boat whilst they were toiling at peril of their lives on the deck of a burning vessel, and bluntly refused to seek their mates. So we kept near the burning ship which was all aback, and lay still until the dawn, when she was little more than a red-hot cradle, through which you could see as through a cage, then made sail and shoved along before a small north-

westerly wind. Three days after we were picked up by an American whaler bound round the Horn into the south seas. I worked as an able seaman in that ship, and was content to do so, but grew weary of the life long before we had entered the Pacific, and one day, having come to an island off which we lay with the design of filling our water-casks, I quietly dropped overboard and softly swam ashore, and next morning the ship was gone. There were a number of blacks on this island, and I thought when they fell in with me to be knocked on the head and devoured; but instead of ill-treating me they carried me to their king or head man, who received me very civilly, fed me and made me rest o' nights in his house. I had hoped since the whaler had dropped anchor here, that other vessels were in the habit of calling, but I was disappointed. No ship came near the island. I never caught sight of a sail on the horizon. Indeed, I gathered from the natives that the presence of any sort of craft at this place was exceedingly uncommon. My heart sickened, and one night I stole a canoe, carrying with me twenty or thirty cocoa-nuts, and put off to sea, hardly caring what became of me, and reckoning that it would be as good to be drowned as to go on living amongst savages for the rest of my life. Well, sir, sometimes paddling or sometimes sailing, after as many hours as would make about three days, I fell in with this island, and stepped ashore to refresh myself and to obtain a night's rest on dry land. I imagined I had left my canoe safe, but when I sought her in the morning she was gone, having broken from her fastenings and drifted away, and here have I been ever since, a helpless prisoner and all alone. My God, sir, how much alone!"

VI.

As he said this he made as if to raise his hands to his eyes to screen or press them; but the movement of his arm was all on a sudden arrested as if by a withering stroke of lightning, and he came to a dead stand with an indescribable expression of what I must call terrified astonishment upon his face. We had by this time advanced so as to bring Jenny within easy eyeshot. I saw her rise when she spied me coming along with a companion, and approach us by perhaps a dozen strides as if to meet us, then she stood waiting for us to draw close. The sunshine was upon her, and her sweet face and fair hair, the rich colour of her lips—nay, the very lustre that lay in the depths of her liquid, glowing eyes were distinctly visible, though she was still a little way off.

My companion had been looking at her when he suddenly stopped dead; he continued to stare whilst you might have counted twenty, and his hand remained arrested midway to his eyes. All at once he cried out in a voice whose shrillness brought it very near to a shriek, "Why, 'tis Janet! 'tis Janet! My wife, sir!" and without another word he ran to her.

She stood erect, and a single glance at her sufficed to assure me that she did not know him; that he lay as black and dead in her memory as all else that had formed her life previous to her awakening from her madness on board the *Lady Charlotte*. He fled to her with his arms outstretched, crying as he ran, "Janet! Janet! My wife! my darling!" I walked hastily after him. I felt as though I were going mad, the blood

surged into my brain, and there was an agony across my brow as if my head would burst. I saw her recoil as he approached; her posture of withdrawal was full of terror, as though she viewed him as some wild man who was about to attempt her life. She waved him off, and then with a wild scream swept past him and rushed up to me. She threw her arms round my neck and cried out, "Who is he? Does he wish to harm me? Why does he fly at me?" and I felt her whole form trembling as she clung, whilst she continued to gaze with horror and consternation at the man, but without the dimmest gleam of recognition of him in her looks.

His arms had fallen to his side, and he gazed at us with an air of miserable dismay. He then slowly approached us.

"He shall not hurt you," I whispered to Jenny, tenderly unclasping her hands from my neck, and holding one of them for such comfort as my grasp might give her.

"Who is he?" she muttered, still trembling violently.

He came close to us, and looking at her as one whose heart had been broken, he said, "Janet, do you not know me?"

She cried, "No," straining at her memory, as I saw by the expression on her gaze.

"I am Jonathan Harness, Janet. I am your husband, dearest;" and then rapidly, but intelligibly, he recited the principal events of the fire at sea.

I observed a faint smile of astonishment and scorn playing upon her lip as she listened to him.

"*This* is my husband," she exclaimed, passing her hand under my arm.

He looked from her to me, from me to her, slowly knitting his brows. My mood was one of defiance, rage, horror, that out of the melancholy loneliness of this ocean-girt island, this mere tiny point of rock fixed in the deep solitude of the infinite expanse of the mighty South Pacific, should have come to me the revelation of my wife's past! Should have come to me in the very ugliest and most blighting of all imaginable forms, the solution of the mystery of the shrouded years which the woman I adored had lived through! I stood as one petrified, but with blood boiling and pulse fiercely bounding to the conflict of the hundred mad emotions within me. He continued to gaze alternately at us for some moments with amazement, seemingly yielding to deep thought, well illustrated by his corrugated brows. He then said—

“May I speak with you apart from this—lady?”

“Certainly,” I answered; and I asked Jenny to return to the tree under which she had been sitting.

She at once went, but with a look of fear and wonder at my companion as she quitted my side.

“Mr. Furlong,” he exclaimed, speaking softly, as if to guard my ear against the thoughts in him which a louder tone might express—I had mentioned my name in telling him my story—“that girl is my wife.”

I bowed. I knew in my heart that he spoke the truth. The suspicion that he was her husband had crept into me, like the very chill of death itself, even whilst he was relating his adventures. It was past all doubting, indeed, now. Of a surety this man was my wife's husband! I inclined my head, and he continued—

“Can you explain why it is that she does not recognize me?”

"She has lost her memory," I responded, scarce able to speak through the involuntary clenching of my teeth.

"Ha!" he cried, with a start, "I ask you in God's name, and in the name of pity too, sir, to let me have her story as you know it."

I related it at once. I caught him bending his ear to catch my words, and wondered at him, believing that my words dropped very clearly from me. I told him how we had found her in the dead of night singing in her madness out in the black calm with a dead sailor for a comrade, how I had nursed her, how she had recovered her intellect, but how her memory had lain dead. I told him of our love and of our marriage in Sydney, and of our sailing thence in the *Lady Charlotte* for home, "and the rest," I said, "you know."

He stood in silence, musing over what he had heard.

I cried out passionately, "Who was to tell that she was married? She was without a ring on her finger!"

He answered, still speaking softly, "It was always her custom to remove her rings before going to bed. She would do so before washing her hands—one of her last acts before lying down. Her wedding ring foundered with the *Mary Anstruther*, yet this hand," said he, holding it up, "for all that, slipped it on her finger sixteen months ago, at St. Thomas's Church, Hammer-smith, where her mother, Mrs. Jameson, lives, or was living, when we sailed."

"She is *my* wife!" I cried, and moved as if to go to her, but stopped on perceiving him bring his hand to his brow and stagger.

"I am faint," he exclaimed. "Can you give me something to eat?"

An emotion of pity and misery filled my heart. My

first thought was to carry him to the gig; but an odd, unintelligible dread of giving him a close view of the little craft possessed me. I conveyed him to the cave instead, where lay a few articles of food, which we had brought with us from the gig at sundown on the preceding evening. There was some biscuit, and there was also the half of a tin of boiled mutton. He flung himself down and ate ravenously, whilst I stood near the entrance watching him with such a hurry and fury of thoughts in my brain that I feared I must presently fall crazy.

"I thank you for this meal," he said presently. "After a diet of cocoa-nuts and roots—pray, sir," he exclaimed, rising, and preserving his subdued voice, whilst I seemed to find in the expression of his face a sort of anxious gratitude, so to define a subtle and indeterminable look, "when do you leave the island?"

"When I have filled the breaker with fresh water," I answered, "and laid in a stock of nuts and any other commodities fit for food which you will have the goodness to point out to me."

"You will take me with you?"

I answered quickly, "Oh yes. God forbid that I should leave a fellow-creature to perish in loneliness in such a desolate hole as this."

"I will fill your breaker for you," he cried, with a gleam of delight in his eye and a pathetic alacrity in his manner. "It is a walk of hard upon two miles from here. This I can do whilst you are collecting the nuts. It will save time. And, Mr. Furlong, let us understand each other. Your wife is *yours*!" His voice trembled, and I looked to see him weep. "I am dead to her, I see, sir. I would not come between you—nay, how could I do so? I am dead to her, I say."

I eyed him jealously; every instinct in me doubted him, and yet my heart glowed with triumph to the thought that he spoke the truth too when I reflected that whilst her memory remained a blank he was literally as dead to her as though he had gone down a calcined corpse with the charred fabric of the ship he had commanded.

"Be it as you say, Captain Harness," said I. "I could not part with her."

He interrupted me. "Mr. Furlong, I see how it is, and understand how it has come about. Help me to deliver myself from this frightful imprisonment, and I promise you that at the first opportunity of separation we will part, never, so far as I can help it, to meet again."

I inclined my head, he extended his hand, and I gave him mine, which he squeezed with a vigour that had something of ferocity in it, so that when he let it fall I glanced at the finger-tips, expecting to see blood there.

"Now, sir," he cried, "let us lose no time. Is the breaker in the boat?"

I answered "Yes."

He walked out of the cave and went directly to the creek, I following him closely, consumed with jealousy, assured in my heart that I ought not to trust him an inch further than I could see him, or the breadth of a finger-nail beyond my interpretation of his motives, yet dominated by his energy. He passed close to Jenny, but never looked at her. I observed that she restlessly toyed with her hands, pulling at her fingers as though she strained her mind whilst she fastened her fine glowing eyes upon his figure. She smiled on catching my glance as I looked back, but a moment or two after her chin was sunk upon her bosom in an attitude of deep thought.

Some fresh water remained in the breaker ; he poured it into several empty tins which were in the boat, saying that though we had not far to go we might yet come to want all the fresh water we could carry. He examined the boat with eager eyes, and swore she was a very pretty, seaworthy craft, and a handsome sailer he did not doubt, and then shouldering the breaker he said he would return within an hour, during which he advised me to collect as many nuts as I could knock down or find lying round about. He trudged past Jenny, but without throwing a glance at her, and after walking a little way along the beach he struck off to the left, and presently I lost sight of him amongst the growths.

The conflict of emotions had exhausted me. I went to the shadow of the tree where Jenny was, and seated myself at her side, leaning my head upon her shoulder. She kissed me and put her arm around me and held me to her. Presently she asked who that man was ; why did he call himself her husband ? Had his living alone in this desert place crazed his poor wits ? She smiled and repeated, "What can he mean, dearest ? I believe he ran at me to kill me."

I answered that it was no doubt as she had surmised ; often shipwrecked men went mad after even a short spell of loneliness upon an uninhabited island. She asked me if I knew his story, and I invented a tale for him. My jealous fear was indeed a devouring passion, and I dreaded in her the dimmest perception of the truth, lest the faint ray should broaden into full light, and she should turn to him who behind the veil was her dear love and her husband before God and man, with a recoil from me, even as she had fled in the darkness that was upon her soul from *his* outstretched arms and cry of love to my side for protection from him.

I felt no uneasiness at his having carried the breaker away. I knew he wanted to save his life as much as I desired to save mine, and that he would certainly return to us when he had filled the little cask. Besides, his filling the empty meat-tins with the fresh water proved his honesty, for small as the supply was, yet with careful usage it might be made to last out three or four days. I sat talking awhile to Jenny, all the while searching her eyes with jealous scrutiny, and finding in them always the old devotion and love, then fell to knocking down cocoa-nuts till I had gathered a little heap of them together.

Meanwhile Captain Harness did not return. I made nothing at first of this delay, for he had told me that it was a considerable walk to the spring; and then again, though his figure showed a muscular outline, and his grip of my hand had been that of a vice, yet I might be sure that his weary captivity and such food as he had subsisted on had deprived him of the power of sustained exertion. But presently I fell to wondering, and then got impatient, and quitting Jenny's side walked a little way through the groups of trees on the left whence I was able to obtain a view of the interior, but I could see nothing of him.

"I wish we had not met him," Jenny exclaimed; "he has fallen crazy. He may play us false."

"Why should he trick us?" I asked; "the breaker is of no use to him. He values his life, and is in a passion of earnestness to escape with us, as who would not be, situated as he is and has been? Besides, he knows there is fresh water enough in the tins to last us a while, with cocoa-nut milk besides, should we determine not to wait for him. No, he will be here presently," I exclaimed, sending searching glances inland and along

the beach. "He may have stumbled, or the excitement of the prospect of release has proved too much for him, and being alone and thinking over it, he has swooned. God knows how it may be, but we must wait for him, dearest. It would be cold-blooded murder to leave him behind us."

"Yes," she said softly, "we must wait for him. But oh, my darling, I wish we had not met him. What could he mean by calling me his wife?" and with a sudden heightened colour, whilst her glowing eyes fell from mine to the ground, she exclaimed again in a voice of plaintive querulousness, with a shake of the head and a wrinkling of her white brows, to a wild swift straining look of her mind within her, so to speak, into the blackness of memory, "What could he mean by calling me his wife?"

I was seized with a sudden sickness of heart, and could not speak. A devil seemed to sit grinning in my brain, mocking the sincerity of my saying that it would be like a cold-blooded murder to leave him behind, and tempting me to be off in headlong hurry, whilst the opportunity existed, with the woman I worshipped; so ending for ever all my fears of him; for I might be sure he would perish on this island before another chance of escape came to him. But what if memory should return to my darling later on? She would remember this man and know him, and count herself and me as his murderers, and in proportion as she had loved him before the darkness fell on her, so would her horror of our deed grow in her until—until—I started to my feet, wild with the burning imaginations which filled me. She took my behaviour to be impatience, and I confirmed the notion in her by hotly walking some little distance inland, as though to seek for signs of Captain Harness. But for

her I should have sought him, if it came to my having to walk round the island; but I would not leave her. I durst not. Suppose he should play me some devilish trick? Figure his watching me from afar, and then sneaking down upon Jenny when I was gone and forcing her into the boat and making sail!

It was an hour before sunset when I saw him coming along round by the point past which I had first encountered him. He had the breaker on his shoulder, and moved with a faltering step. He beckoned to me when he was abreast of the slope of land in which the cave was, and halted there.

"I cannot find the fresh-water spring," he exclaimed in a voice indicative of a certain degree of exhaustion. "It was bubbling this morning, and now the soil there is dry. A slight shock of earthquake might account for the water ceasing to run. Likely as not I have missed its bearings; yet I ought to know where it is, for I have repaired to it day after day from the hole where I made my bed round yonder," nodding in a way to indicate the other side of the hill. "I have been hunting all this while for another spring, but have found nothing. I determined to linger no longer, lest you should suppose that I had met with some bad accident."

He put down the breaker, giving it a rap with his knuckles to show that it was empty.

"Then," said I, "we must start with what we have."

"No," he exclaimed, "be advised by me; I am an old sailor. The stock is much too small. There will be *three* of us now. Think of a week of dead calms or of head-winds blowing us to the south'ard. Thirst is a frightful thing, Mr. Furlong. We shall meet with what we want to-morrow, depend on it. The spring may bubble forth again this very night. We will hunt

together, and a night's rest on top of the joy, the certainty of deliverance, fills me with—" he clasped his hands and raised his eyes as he said this, "will fit me to start on a thorough search at sunrise."

Suspicious of an undefinable kind stirred strongly within me. I hurriedly reasoned within myself that I distrusted the man because I was jealous of him, and feared and even hated him. His voice was subdued, and I could find nothing but gratitude, and eager goodwill in his manner and looks.

"Besides," he continued, with a glance at the southwestern sky, "there's a hint of thunder in the dimming of that blue down there that may prognosticate ugly weather. I don't know. Your boat is a good boat, but her beam threatens too much friskness for safety in anything like such seas as a strong breeze of wind sets running in these waters. Yet," cried he with a sort of passionate quickness, "I am madder to get away than ever you can be, sir. If you are willing to risk it, we will start at once. But if only for the sake of—of—your wife—" he swallowed with a dry throat as he uttered the word, "I would exhort you, in the name of God, not to start on a boat voyage without filling up with as much fresh water as we can manage to stock."

I reflected a moment with a look at the mighty spread of blue waters brimming into the boundless distance, and then agreed with him.

"Be it as you suggest," I exclaimed; "another night's rest on solid land will hurt neither the—the lady nor myself."

There was an awkward pause.

"Will you spare me another small meal?" he said. "I will then be off to my den round the hill yonder, and at sunrise you will find me waiting for you round that

point. This breaker can be left here." He placed it at the foot of a tree. "We are alone; there is no fear of its being removed."

In silence we stepped to the cave, where he devoured the remainder, and a slender remainder it was, of the meat and biscuit there. He then grasped me by the hand, giving my fingers another vice-like squeeze, and in silence strode away towards the point round which he vanished. I felt grateful to him for his withdrawal. The mere proximity of him I think during the night would have been intolerable. It would be otherwise I felt in the open boat. Association would be rendered endurable by sheer necessity; but here was a broad area of land with hills to stand between him and Jenny, and I seemed to find an honesty in his conduct, a delicacy of feeling that spoke well for his heart. Shame, repugnance, jealous dislike seized upon me as I watched his retreating figure. His conduct made me feel a bitter wrong-doer, and I was sensible of sinning heavily against this man by my headlong fiery assertion of my claims to the woman who before God and the world was his and not mine.

I went to the boat and brought away food enough to serve as a meal for Jenny and me. She inquired about the man, and I told her how he had failed to find the spring; how he had represented to me the folly of leaving the island without a good stock of water; how he had gone away round the point yonder to pass the night in the place he had been used to sleep in since his captivity.

"Our passing another night on the island," I said, "matters little. We are together at all events," I added; and she pressed her lips to my forehead as I said this, saying, "Yes, we are together. What does it

matter then where we are ? ” Indeed, had I been alone, that is to say, had I not fallen in with this Captain Harness, I should not have thought of leaving the island in the face of the south-western sky, supposing of course that I had delayed our departure until this hour. The great sun hung close over the horizon ; a rusty, dim, blood-red disc, rayless amid the smoky thunder-shadow that clothed the sky there, with a few dull lines of tarnished brass as it were snaking under him for a wake upon the slowly heaving folds of the ocean. The character of the swell seemed to show a weight of wind away down south-west. Already there was a small roaring of surf trembling through the quiet atmosphere from the other side of the island. But in the creek, the water was as quicksilver, flushed with the red of the sunset, and beyond it the ocean, becalmed by the land, floated in gentle undulations, every burnished brow as it went reflecting with a sulky sort of flash the stormy, sullen light in the west.

I spread the sail as before in the cave, but it was past nine o'clock, as I might guess by a glance at the few stars that shone more like smears of radiance than orbs of light in the mistiness, before Jenny lay down to sleep. She had expressed no uneasiness as to Captain Harness. The thought of his being on the other side of the island satisfied her ; but my mind was much too misgiving to suffer me to rest. I feigned that the threat of dirty weather rendered me uneasy about the boat, and that I meant to keep an eye upon her until I had satisfied myself as to what lay behind the lightning that had been sparkling vividly down in the south-west ever since the darkness.

“ But you will sleep, my dearest,” I said ; “ we may be in the heart of the wide sea to-morrow night, and

sound rest will prepare you for the discomfort and hardships of the open boat."

Her nature was exquisitely docile. She knew by my voice—for it was pitch-dark in the cave, with just a winking as it were of the white sail cloth upon the ground to the reflection of the lightning at the zenith—that I wished her to sleep, and she promised to do so and to fear nothing, only bidding me come and lie by her side when my mind had grown easy, since she would rest the better for having my hand in hers.

It was of a sooty blackness where the shadow of the storm lay. Every electric sparkle threw out into ghastly relief the apparently motionless forms of vast masses of vapour; it was like to the discharge of mighty ordnance over the rim of Titanic battlements, and the ocean started out into a heaving plain of dead pale sulphur to the flashings, turning of an ebon blackness again in a breath. The thunder was incessant but faint, and for my part it seemed to me as if the storm were settling away into the north-east with little or no wind in it or to follow. I flitted restlessly betwixt the creek's edge and the cavern's entrance. It would have been very dark but for the south-western glares which flung a dim, brief light like the sweep of a huge lantern in some giant hand. Yet the brilliant white beach made a sort of light of its own as foam does, and the outline of the boat showed plainly against it as she rested with her stern adry to midway to the length of her keel. Often I would look in upon the darling sleeper in the cave, and once or twice I softly called to her, but her silence and regular respiration let me know that she slumbered soundly. Her form was faintly distinguishable upon the white ground of the gig's sail to the dim glancings of the sky which the mouth of the cave framed. I was

restless with misgivings, yet could not tell why I should be so. It was not the storm that I feared; as the boat lay she was as safe as if we had dragged her to, and stowed her away in, the cavern. It was Captain Harness whom I dreaded; and yet my judgment in vain sought to satisfy itself that my instincts were in the right. What did I fear? That he would steal the boat and abandon us to the horrors of the solitude of this ocean rock? He was a sailor at all events, and would understand the value of a companion in such a navigation as lay before us. Was it my profound jealousy that I mistook for mistrust?

To and fro I walked like a sentinel, reasoning hard against my apprehensions, yet all the while looking to right and left as I paced, as though at any moment I might witness Harness's form stealing towards me. Meanwhile the storm was sulkily growling its way from south-east to northwards as I had expected. A few hot drops fell off the edge of the shadow, whose utmost pinion was overhead. The surf was noisy on the other side of the island, but here it slipped up and down the gleaming coral slope in a soothing simmering and seething sound.

I guessed it was somewhere between half-past one and two o'clock in the morning when I was suddenly overtaken by an overwhelming sensation of weariness. Nature seemed to yield all at once to the heavy strain that had been put upon her throughout the livelong day by the violence of my emotions and the distracting thoughts which had bowed me down. Besides, I had been ceaselessly on the move since about nine o'clock; my legs seemed to sink under me, yet I would not enter the cave. I was urged by an imperious misgiving to continue in the open, and to go on acting the part of

sentry until sunrise. But it was imperative that I should sit awhile to ease the intolerable aching in my legs, and so I went to the tree that had sheltered Jenny during the day and squatted at the foot of it Lascar fashion.

Scarce was I seated when my eyelids turned into lead. I remember feebly struggling with a supreme sensation of drowsiness.

* * * * *

I awoke with a start, and opened my eyes against the grey dawn over the sea that went steeping in a dusky throbbing shadow to the faintness that was showing like a light shining through oiled paper. My limbs were stiff and numbed, and I stood erect with a groan, wondering how long I had slept. The lightning had ceased; the last of the storm had disappeared some time before. The sky was full of stars, which were paling rapidly to the gathering light of the approaching day; and there was a soft, steady breeze of wind blowing directly off the island, fragrant with a cool and sweet incense of the nameless vegetation round about the hills.

I looked for the boat, and looked again, rubbed my eyes and once more looked. She was gone! I somehow thought only of *her* for the moment, and sprang like a wolf after its prey to the edge of the creek and looked again. The boat was gone! A wild cry that seemed to wring itself out of my heart broke from my lips; then my mind went to my darling, and I rushed to the cave. There was dawn enough now to float a stealthy light into the interior. I peered in and found the place empty. My wife was gone, the sail had been removed. I stared, believing myself to be in a dream; then, like a maniac aimlessly crying out, "O God! O God!" I sped to the

creek side again, believing myself to be under a delusion, and that I should behold the boat if I sought her.

Gone! and here was I now alone—bereft of the woman I loved, robbed of my sole means of escape!

I looked along the beach, and my eye went to the tree at the foot of which Captain Harness had placed the breaker, leaving it there for the night; it had been removed. Ha! thought I, passing my hand over my streaming forehead, *this* is what my fears foreboded. Captain Harness's statement that he could not find the spring was a lie. His object was to detain me throughout the night—for *this*. But where was Jenny? Was this flight a conspiracy? Had she recognized her husband from the beginning, acted her old part of tenderness and devotion with a secret loathing of me in her thorough recurrence of the passion that had made her Captain Harness's wife? Had she been feigning sleep when I called to her from the cavern's entrance? Was her desire that I should lie by her side a stratagem to enable her to make sure that I was slumbering that she might steal out to the man who would be lying in ambush close by, and who would at once distinguish her form upon the white ground of the beach?

I stood motionless as though struck by lightning. My head was in agony, as though some red-hot ligament encircled it. It was then that the flashing limb of the sun uprose, and the ocean opened blue and brilliant to his beam. I strained my eyes over the sea, but there was nothing in view. Well, if they had launched the boat and sailed away but an hour before, so tiny a craft was she that the merry little draught now blowing would have slid her out of sight despite her sail that could show but as the tip of a sea-bird's wing even though no more than a couple of miles distant. The memory of

my behaviour satisfies me that my mind must have gone adrift for a while. I was suddenly seized with the notion that Jenny had hidden herself to scare me, and I recollect racing along the beach and searching amongst the trees, and penetrating indeed near upon a mile inland in search of her, whilst I continued to call out her name until my voice failed me. I returned to the neighbourhood of the creek, exhausted in mind and body, and, picking up a nut, pierced the two soft spots in it with a penknife and drank. The draught was a wonderful refreshment, and seemed to help my mind back to its old moorings. I sat me down under the very same tree in whose shadow Jenny had kept watch and fell to thinking. The sky went in a bright blue slope to the sea line with a few white clouds to soften the hardness of its wide, bald, blue stare, and the sea trembled in flashings as of diamonds to the delicate fingering of its long and peaceful swayings by the soft aromatic off-shore wind.

I will not attempt to give expression to the thoughts which swept through my mind. I felt that I was a doomed man and must shortly perish, not indeed because the island might be lacking in the means to enable me to keep body and soul together, but because I knew that but a very brief term of this kind of solitude would suffice to drive me out of my mind, to break my heart, and destroy me. Why, I remember thinking, had it come about that of the numerous islands which stud these waters we should have been cast upon this one? Why, of the many seamen who have encountered shipwreck in the South Pacific, should it have been my destiny to fall in with the one man of them all whom I could have earnestly prayed to God to conceal me and Jenny from?

The morning crept away. The sun rose higher and higher until he shone overhead in the north, and his wake floated in a dazzling stream from the edge of the sea to the small curls of foam which ran up and down the coral beach in a soft, seething sound. Hour after hour I had sat contemplating the ocean with a glazed and hopeless gaze, and a heart fast sickening and sinking under its burthen of horror, and grief, and misery. Suddenly, my eye wandering mechanically a little way from the eastern side of the river of glory flowing under the sun, I caught sight of a speck, a tiny black dot upon the water. It vanished. I rubbed my eyelids to view it again, and once more perceived it. Again it disappeared, but I understood that, whatever it might be, its coming and going was owing to the lift and fall of the swell. I watched it with strained eyes, with a preternatural intentness as will be supposed of one in my situation. It might be a ship's boat; it might be a big balk of timber, whose green, weed-laden sides showed black against the hinder effulgence. I kept my gaze rooted upon it until its very slow but certain enlargement satisfied me that it was a boat, and that it was approaching the island.

I leaned my back against Jenny's cocoa-nut tree watching it. Then, later on, I could faintly catch the sparkle of the blades of a couple of oars rising and falling. At first I had viewed it without hope or expectation. I was sensible of no emotion raised in me by the sight of it. It might be a canoe for all I knew, with inmates to be vigilantly shunned; but when I saw that it was indeed a ship's boat impelled by a pair of oars, though I could not yet distinguish the rower, a consuming passion of anxiety took possession of me, a wild emotion of joy that trembled too with the dread of

disappointment. At times I held my breath. The boat slowly approached, the movement of the oars growing more and more languid, it struck me. Now I could perceive that the little fabric was urged by a single person ; within another ten minutes I could make out the form of Jenny slowly and in a fainting manner rowing the gig towards the part of the beach upon which I stood gazing. I rushed to the very wash of the water and cried to her ; I called upon her name, I flourished my arms ; I fell upon my knees and thanked God. In my insane eagerness to come at her, to assist her—for I witnessed exhaustion in every feeble rise of the blades—I waded waist-high into the water, but durst not strike out lest the tide should settle me away from her, and likewise because I understood that my strength had been greatly reduced, and that I might perish even in a short swim. She was without a covering to her head, and the light of the sun shone ruddy in her beautiful hair. I saw her white face turn again and again upon her shoulder, as though despairfully measuring the distance that yet separated her from the land. I cried to her to rest on her oars, to take breath, but she persisted, and at a snail's pace the little keel stole through the water to the devoted efforts of her brave hands, until the stem was near enough for me to grasp, and then with the strength of a dozen men I ran the boat up the beach till little more than her sternpost touched the water.

My darling arose, staggered, panting cruelly, drops of distress from her brow drowning her sweet eyes as with tears. She opened her arms for me to receive her, and I had her heart against mine in an instant. As I stood holding her, incapable at the moment of speech, my eye went to the inside of the boat, and at the bottom of it, close to where the mast was stepped, lay the body

of Captain Harness. He was dead ! There was a terrible gash on the right side of his throat, and his handsome head lay steeping in the blood that had drained out of his death wound. Beside him lay the big clasp knife that belonged to me, the weapon with which I had cut away the gear that confined the gig to the stern of the *Lady Charlotte*.

Jenny lay a dead weight in my arms. She had fainted. One might have thought that she had died in my embrace, so white were her cheek and lips, so deathlike the glaze on the streak of eye upon which the long fringes of her lids had not closed. I bore her to the shadow of the cocoa-nut tree, where the incline of the beach furnished a sort of pillow for her head, and rushed to the boat for such fresh water as I might find in her. The breaker was in the bows and was *full* ! So, then, the spring that was yesterday missing had manifestly bubbled forth again during the small hours of the morning at the will of the villain who lay dead before me ! I sprang to the side of my love, put water to her lips, and bathed her brow ; then with headlong speed, conveyed the sail from the boat to the cavern, that it might serve her as a couch in an atmosphere luxurious for its coolness and shadow, in comparison with the hot glare of the sunshine streaming off the sea and the lustrous slope of the beach. She revived just as I laid her down, and looked at me a little wildly at first, and then smiled and lifted her hand to take mine, but dropped it on her heart ere I could grasp it, and said in a low voice—

“ I am in pain here. I am dying, I fear.”

“ No, no,” I cried passionately, “ my sweet one. ’Tis but the effects of desperate overexertion. Rest and sleep will extinguish the pain.”

She languidly shook her head with another smile full of tenderness and devotion.

"Christopher," she whispered.

I knelt by her side.

"The man came to me," she said in a weak voice, "and gagged me. It was pitch-dark. I awoke in the blackness, half suffocated by the binding about my mouth, and I felt him tie my hands together. I could not utter a sound. He raised and carried me down to the boat, and then left me, but returned quickly with the sail and the breaker. He thrust the boat off the beach into the water, and after this I remember no more until I awoke to find myself far out at sea alone with the man, and this island a dim patch in the distance."

She paused, breathing quickly and distressfully. I kissed her hand and bathed her brow with cold water; and after a little she continued, but speaking lower and lower yet in the accents of one in whom life is slowly but surely ebbing.

"He had freed my mouth and unbound my hands. The dawn had broken, and the sun was rising. I raised myself from the bottom of the boat. He moved as if to help me, but I extended my arms to thrust him away if he approached. He told me that I was his wife, that it made his heart bleed to be compelled to use me with such violence, but that I was his, and that he meant to have me for his own—for his own I was! and he told me he would have killed you had you risen from your sleep at the foot of the tree, and attempted to hinder him from taking me with him from the island. I scarcely heeded his words. He eyed me wildly, and knowing him to be mad, I resolved to throw myself into the water when he was not looking. But—but——"

Her voice failed her again. Once more I cooled her brow and put water to her lips.

"Hush, dearest—endeavour to sleep," I whispered. "The rest you will tell me by-and-by."

A new shade of paleness had entered her face, her lips were ashen, and I noticed the fingers of her hand flickering, as it were, about her heart.

"Your knife lay at his feet," she continued, so feebly that I had to bend my ear close to her lips to catch her words. "I stole it towards me with my foot until my dress hid it. Presently he left the helm to go into the bows for a drink of water from the breaker. I picked up the knife and softly crept up to him, and whilst he poured some water into a tin I stabbed him with all my might in the neck. He sprang up and fell in the middle of the boat where he lies now. The island was still in sight, the oars were heavy, and there was a weary waste of water between you and me, dearest."

Her voice failed her, her eyes closed, and her hand fell from her heart. She never spoke again. All through that evening, all through the long and horrible night that followed, I continued to kneel at her side, moistening her white temples, pressing kisses to her lips, bathing and caressing her hands, and calling upon Almighty God to have pity upon my agony and to spare her to me. When the first of the dawn came sifting dimly into the cave, it found me crouching motionless beside her dead form.

* * * * *

Mr. Furlong's narrative concludes with the above words. Thirteen days after the death of the girl, a brig named the *Somerset*, a trader in those seas, fell in with him at a distance of some twenty leagues to the eastwards of the island on which he and his wife had landed.

He was little more than a skeleton, and had to be lifted out of the boat. Hunger or thirst appeared to have supplemented in him the work of grief. The people of the brig supposed him crazy, though the story he gave them was intelligible enough so far as it went; that is to say, he spoke of the *Lady Charlotte*, and told them of the collision, and explained how he had managed to escape; but all who heard him conjectured that there was more behind than he chose to relate; and this reserve, coupled with his behaviour, his profound melancholy, his frequent mutterings to himself, and extravagant breakings away as it were from his thoughts in demonstrations of crazy passion, persuaded all hands that shipwreck had impaired his reason. He left the brig at Valparaiso, and a fortnight after proceeded thence in a ship bound to the River Thames.

JEREMY YORK.

I.

A LIGHT westerly wind had crowded the spacious waters of the Downs with anchored vessels. The colour, the apparel, the quaint bravery of the ships and mariners of the last century, made a noble and sparkling show of the marine pageant. The hour was a little before sundown, and the gush of warm red glory past the giant headland went in a tincture of dark gold to the zenith, and thence pale as amber to the eastern sea-line, with a hot crimson head of cloud here and there vaguely defined upon the soft radiance, whilst the horizon ran with a line as clear as though scored with the sweep of the leg of a pair of compasses.

It was an evening in the month of September. There were scarce fewer than three hundred sail of vessels gently straining at their hemp cables to the easterly set of the water. They had come together as if by magic ; for that morning the historic tract of waters had steeped bare to the white terraces of the Forelands, whilst now the multitudinous shipping showed like a forest upon the sea, gay with fluttering pennons, delicate as a bit of pencilling with the wondrous intricacies of the rigging, brilliant with the red sheen of the waning luminary upon glass and brass ; upon the writhing of gilt-work upon quarter-galleries and castellated sterns ;

upon innumerable figure-heads of fantastic device; upon yellow spars where the expiring flames in the west trembled in veins of burnished brass.

An old-world scene of this kind is not to be matched nowadays. The iron craft has entered the soul of the marine, and all is dull, flat, prosaic. Ships of fifty fashions filled the Downs that evening. There was the towering three-decker, grand as a palace abaft, with handsome galleries and spacious windows trembling to the lustre that rose to them from off the running water, the red coats of marines dotting the white lines that crowned her adamantine defences, shrouds as thick as cables soaring to huge round tops, from which, higher and higher yet, rose topmast and topgallant-mast and royal-mast into miracles of airy delicacy, from whose central spire languidly floated the pennon of the ship of the state. There was the East Indiaman outward bound, newly brought up, scarcely less regal in her way than the first-rate, with John Company's house-flag at the main under the dog-vane that glanced like a streak of fire to the raining of the splendour beyond the line of coast, the red flag at her peak, the grinning lips of cannon along her sides, the glitter of uniforms upon her quarter-deck, and rows of lively hearties aloft upon her topsail-yards snugging the spaces of white cloths into lines of snow. There were the little bilander bound to the Mediterranean, rigged with a long lateen yard upon her mainmast; the high-sterned pink; the round-bowed sturdy snow; the galley of a hundred and fifty tons, whose long low hull, with ports for sweeps, gave her a most piratical look, with a malignant fancy to follow on of a breathless calm and a stagnated vessel, towards which this same galley is impelled by her huge oars, as though she were some vast deadly marine insect

subtly though swiftly stirring to the impulse of its antennæ.

The scene was full of light and life. Standing on Deal beach, so quiet was everything ashore, so still this hour of sundown, you would have heard a blending of innumerable sounds softened into music by distance—the strains of fiddles in the nearer craft, the voices of men singing, the pleasant noise of bells, the clank and rattle of winches and capstans and windlasses, the chorusings of lungs of leather stowing the canvas, the shrill chirpings of boatswains' whistles. Then on a sudden broke the harsh thunder of a gun from the line-of-battle ship. It was instantly followed by the graceful drooping of the many-coloured bunting to right and left, denoting the hour of sunset; and now masthead and gaff-end showed bare of the bunting that had but a little before made the mass of shipping appear like a floating city of banners; and high above the congregation of masts the towering fabric of the three-decker loomed grim and forbidding upon the darkness of the evening stealthily creeping like some dark curl of breeze out of the east.

II.

WHILST the sullen explosion of the gun was echoing along the Sandwich plains, a large, exceedingly handsome brig, that had been quietly pushing her way into the heart of the shipping, helped rather by the tide than by the faint fannings aloft, hauled up her courses and let go all halliards; and a minute after her anchor fell from the cathead, and she swung quietly to the drag of her cable. She was from down Channel, a homeward-

bounder. But those were the ambling days of trade ; no fuss was made over what we now call prompt despatch. It was merely a question of how the wind sat ; and a six weeks' detention in the Downs was accepted as a commonplace incident in a voyage from the Thames to foreign parts.

A few minutes after the brig's anchor had been let go, a signal was made to the shore for a boat. The twilight was yet abroad ; the line of the land dark against the rusty crimson of the west ; the flag was to be readily descried, and there was a fluttering of air still to make a conspicuous thing of the bunting amid the congregation of colourless spars and masts, where, here and there, you already saw the twinkling of a cabin-lamp or of a lantern swinging pendulum-like from the fore-stay.

A tall young fellow of some three or four and twenty years of age stood in the gangway of the brig, impatiently gazing shorewards. He was distinctly handsome, spite of a certain haggardness and hollowness that seemed to betoken a considerable spell of illness. His eyes were large, dark, and lustrous, full of intelligence, and, as one should say, of softness also. He stood a little above six feet, but with the stoop of a man who had not yet been able to stiffen himself out of a long term of prostrating sickness. His hair was long and abundant and curled plentifully upon his shoulders and back—an oddity in him, to engage at least a shore-going eye, accustomed to the perukes and bags and “tyes” of the streets. He was habited plainly in a coat with vast cuffs and pockets and metal buttons, crimson breeches, coarse grey stockings, and shovel-shaped shoes heavy with large plate buckles. His hat was a three-cornered affair, and from time to time he fanned his face with it,

whilst he continued to watch steadfastly and anxiously the approach of a boat from Deal beach.

"Here comes something that looks like a punt, at last, Mr. York," exclaimed the skipper of the brig, approaching him—a broad-beamed, bullet-headed bit of a man, standing on oval shanks and carrying a face as red as the flag he sailed under. "Hope you'll pick up ashore, I do. Remember my words—if you feel able to ship along with me by the time I am ready to sail, and that's giving you from now to December, why, all that I can say is, there's a berth ready for you."

"I am heartily obliged to you, sir, for the offer," said the other; "and I thank you from the depths of my soul for the kindness you've done me. Indeed, Captain Settle, I shall never forget you; and if I am equal to going a-sailing again by December, you may reckon me already, sir, as upon the ship's articles."

They continued exchanging compliments after this pattern whilst the boat approached; presently it was alongside, and the tall young fellow whom the captain had addressed as Mr. York prepared to descend.

"I shall endeavour to be in London the week after next," he exclaimed, as he swung a moment by the man-ropes; "and I trust, captain, you'll not forget to put in a good word for me with the owners of the *Cælia*. It will be a matter of twenty-eight pounds to me, who am now in a condition to view even a sixpence as a very serious thing."

"Trust me, trust me, Mr. York," the captain exclaimed, with a cheery wave of his hand.

The tall young fellow, named Jeremy York, lowered himself into the boat; a small bundle—apparently all the luggage he had—was handed down to him by the skipper; he flourished his hat; the crew of the brig,

some of whom were at work upon the forecastle and some aloft, gave him a cheer ; and in a moment or two he was being swept shorewards by the vigorous arms of a brace of Deal boatmen.

It was now dark ; the western hectic was gone, the stars floated in a showering of brilliant points to the liquid dusk, that hung glimmerless above the horizon, with here and there a round-browed cloud with a sheen upon it like the head of a snow-clad rise to obscure a narrow space of the sparkling dome. The Foreland soared wan and massive from the white wash of the water at its base, then swept darkly to the flat land upon which were grouped the houses of the town of Deal, whose foreshore at this moment winked with its row of oil lamps, or a dim illumination in places of small lozenge-paved windows, and a brighter streak of light striking through an open door. High and dry upon the shingle rested groups of boats ; and at intervals, as York approached the beach, he would catch a noise like to a rush of water upon shingle, and mark some little fabric newly launched, swiftly making off on a small buccaneering cruise of its own amongst the shipping, or maybe to intercept some shadow hovering past the Goodwins with her hold full of silks, tobacco, tea, and spirits, to be "run" before the morning, and under the noses, too, of the look-out aboard the first-rate, and the revenue people, trudging, solitary and austere, along the tall cliffs' edge or the long low line of beach.

"Many people in Deal just now ?" York inquired of one of the boatmen.

"Town choke full, Oi allow," was the answer. "Take them there ships," with a nod in the starlight towards the phantasmal huddle over the stern of the boat : "one person from each craft 'ud be more'n enough

to overflow us, and you'd say that one-third of every ship's company out yonder had come ashore."

"A bother!" cried the young fellow, a little petulantly; "small prospect of my hiring a bed, if it be as you say. D'ye think there's a chance of my getting a night's rest in your town?"

"Whoy not?" answered the other boatman gruffly. "Ye're a seafaring man beloike, and there ought to be more'n one soft plank proper for sailor's bones to be found vacant at Deal."

"No planking it for me, not if there's a mattress to be hired!" cried York. "Suffer such a fever as has kept me wasting for six months in Valparaiso, and you'll wish your skeleton marrowless, that it might give over aching."

"There are inns enough, anyway," said one of the men. "Troy Mother Puddell's first. She keeps the sign of the Cat o' Nine Tails, Sandown way. There should be a chance there; and Oi'll tell ye whoy: her liquor's cust bad. She's beknown for *that*, 'soides high tarms. 'Tain't that I name her 'cause I love her; but when a sick gent wants a bed, he ain't going to be hindered by a shilling too much, let alone a quality o' liquor there's no call for him to drink."

As the man spoke, the boat's keel grounded on the shingle, and the little craft swept broadside to the beach. York, picking up his bundle, stepped out, and inquired the fare. The boatmen demanded six shillings.

"See here," said he, pulling out a half-guinea piece, "this is all the money I possess, and I shall have no more until I can beg, borrow, or steal it. If I deduct six shillings from this, what does it leave me?"

"Give us foive," said the men.

"Three," he answered; "for God's sake, don't take advantage of a sick sailor!"

An altercation followed; York was resolved, the boatmen importunate and clamorous, and presently offensive. Other boatmen were attracted by the noise, and soon there was a crowd of Deal men listening to the shouts of their two brethren and the cold determined remonstrances of Mr. Jeremy York.

At last the tall young fellow cried out, "Make it four shillings, then, and you shall be paid." The others agreed; the half-guinea was changed into silver; and York walked away, followed curiously by the eyes of the group of men who had assembled.

"Tall enough for a Maypole," said one of them.

"What's his sect?" exclaimed another. "Looks as if his hair grewed from a woman's head."

"Smite me," cried one of the two boatmen who had pulled the young fellow ashore, "if ever I takes a job again without first agreeing with the party as to tarms. A dirty four shillin'! But what's a man to dew? He outs with his half-guinea piece, and says 'tis all the money he's got in the world; and who's to know that it ain't a forged bit tew? But that's Billy Tucker's consarn, who's got the coin." He spat with disgust and lurched off, on which the group broke up, and made in several detachments for the various public-houses or inns in Beach Street.

III.

BEACH STREET was in those days much as it is now, the quaintest, saltiest imaginable thoroughfare on the coast of Great Britain ; littered with anchors of all sizes, with huge coils of hemp cable, with odd fantastic capstans for the winding-up of boats, with tall poles for the spreading of nets, lines from window to window for the easy drying of linen, queer dusky alleys leading at night-time into a true smuggling blackness of atmosphere ; beerhouse after beerhouse in friendly juxtaposition, with a perpetual seething and hissing of surf upon the steep shingle, as a regale to the ear, and miles of sand plains beyond billowing to Sandwich, and sweet and musical into late autumn daytime with wild flowers of fifty different sorts and birds of many kinds.

It was now about nine o'clock in the evening ; there was no moon, the starlight made no sheen, and the sea brimmed in tremorless ebony to its confines. The few oil lamps in Beach Street threw a feeble gleam upon the shingly road ; but how full of people Deal was on this particular night York might have gathered from the groups of men showing through every tavern window he passed ; drinking, arguing, singing, caper-cutting, as Jack will when newly come ashore, amid motionless fogs of tobacco smoke. The first sign his eye caught was that of the Kentish Sickie. He entered the place, and found it crowded with boatmen and seamen. The landlord, a purple-faced man, who had removed his wig for air, and yet looked half dead with heat, stood behind a little bar or counter drawing ale out of a cask, the top of which was on a level with his head. York inquired if

he could have a bed; the landlord shook his head, with a glance at the tall youth, as though he suspected a kind of impertinence in such a question in the face of the crowd of people smoking and drinking beyond.

"Can you name me a house in which I'm likely to obtain a bed for the night?" said York.

"No," said the purple-faced man, continuing to draw ale into thick one-legged glass tumblers which, as fast as he filled them, he pushed to a couple of fellows, who carried them to the tables. "It'll be odd if ye gits a bed to loie in to-night, mate, in Deal. Whoy, it'll be ending in the bortmen having to turn their borts keel-up for lodgings;" at which observation a large heavy man, in a round hat and a great belt round his waist, fit for the snugging of a horse-pistol or two, burst into a loud laugh.

York walked out, and entered another tavern hard by. This, too, was full, its five bedrooms crammed, the state-bed of the place to be occupied by no fewer than four men, to lie heel to heel, whenever it should suit them to withdraw to it; as the perspiring, dried-up little landlord informed York with a grin of exquisite satisfaction.

He tried a third, a fourth; tramped on to the Cat o' Nine Tails alehouse; but to no purpose. Had every house had its forty beds to let, they would not have apparently met the demand that night for the accommodation from the captains, mates, passengers, sailors who had come ashore on special business, or who had deserted, or who had to take the coach next day for London or wherever they might live, counting (as passengers) upon days and perhaps weeks of detention if they stuck to the craft lying out in the Downs yonder.

York had now reached the Sandown extremity of

Deal; he retraced his steps, and passing the houses he had visited, he arrived at much such another one as they, called the Lonely Star, into which he walked. At the end of a tolerably long narrow passage was an open door, out of which floated clouds of tobacco-smoke, along with the incense of the punch-bowl. A little on this side the door was a staircase, and nearer yet to the entrance a recess, in which sat a plump woman of fifty, with sloe-black eyes and red cheeks and treble chin. Over her head hung an old-fashioned lantern, the light of which was comfortably reflected in rows of bottles on shelves behind her filled with liquors of various dyes.

"Can I have a bed in this house?" asked York of this plump, good-humoured woman, who at his approach let fall some knitting she was at work upon.

She ran her bright black eyes over him with an expression as though she found pleasure in the sight of his long womanly hair and pale handsome face and manliness of stature, and answered after a minute's thinking, "I'm afraid not, sir. Every bed in the house is taken. I never remember Deal so full of strangers."

"I shall have to return to the ship, then," he exclaimed. "Yet I would rather not. Plying betwixt the Downs and the shore is costly work to a poor man—at least your boatmen make it so. A spare sofa would serve me. I have been ill in South America, and am not yet well, and durst not lie in the open. A pillow and a roof for my head would suffice. I must be up by daybreak, perhaps before. My sweetheart's mother, Mrs. Bax, lives t'other side of Sandwich, more Minster-way than that town.—D'ye know her, ma'am?"

"By name, sir; a very decent, good lady, I'm sure."

"There's a bed for me there; but it's too far to

reach it on foot to-night. Besides, my sweetheart, Jenny, will not expect me till to-morrow by noon, or thereabouts. Now, what am I to do for a bed? There will be other houses of entertainment in this town besides those I have visited in this street?"

"There's a gentleman," said the landlady, after a short spell of thought, "lying upstairs who has used my house for some years running. 'Tis but a bit of a room he's in, sir; but he rests in a great big bed, broad enough to house a large family. If you wouldn't mind sharing it with him, he'd accommodate you at my request, I don't doubt. What do you say?"

"You are very good, ma'am; 'twould be a godsend, I assure you. I could not feel more weary had I been tramping Deal all day."

"Step into the end room, then," said she, "and call for what you will, whilst I find out if the gentleman will receive you."

He entered, and found himself in the company of some score and a half of seamen of all denominations, with a sprinkling of soldiers and a few women. The room was unpleasantly full; the height of it was no taller than a small ship's 'tween-decks, and it had something of the look of a 'tween-decks, with its substantial joists or rafters, its small porthole-like windows, and walls resembling bulkheads. A few of the nearer folks stared at him on his entrance, and a couple of the women giggled a bit at his hair; but the company were on the whole rather too tipsy to give him much heed. It was an old-world scene that, for its utterly vanished qualities of colour, atmosphere, attire, is scarcely imaginable in these days; unsnuffed rushlights flaring on the tall, narrow chimney-piece and on the tables; men mahogany-cheeked with weather, some wearing

their own hair in tails, some with wigs, with here a three-cornered hat cocked over its owner's nose, there a round tarpaulin perched on nine hairs, with a fathom of ribbon down the back; most of the people smoking long clay pipes, and arguing with drunken animation, with now and again the added hullabaloo of one who would set up his throat for a song; the women in colours which made one think of a crockery shepherdess; and visions of copper-nosed salts looming out in postures of wrangling at the tables in smoke-obscured corners.

York took a chair near the door, and called to the drawer for a glass of spirits. After a little the landlady came to him, and said that she had knocked at Mr. Worksop's door and asked if he would object to a bedfellow, and that his answer was the gentleman was welcome if so be he would contrive to ride with an up-and-down cable, by which she understood Mr. Worksop to mean that he expected the gentleman to keep to his side of the bed. York thanked her, and said he should be glad to go to rest at once.

"I shall be quitting your house before you're up," said he; "and will pay you for the bed now, if you please."

"As you will, sir," said she; "it will be a shilling."

He gave her the money.

"There will be no difficulty," he exclaimed, "in letting myself out in the morning? I do not wish to disturb the house by a stiff wrestle with harsh bolts and difficult locks."

"That'll be your door, sir," said she, pointing to the street entrance at the end of the passage. "There is but one bolt, and it shoots easily. We fear nothing but the foreign invader at Deal, sir. The latch will fall when you pull the door after you."

He thanked her, took his bundle, and followed her upstairs. She knocked at a little door painted stone-colour, leaning as with age in its frame. A voice answered, "Come in," in a muffled hurricane note.

"It's the gent, Mr. Worksop, as is to lie with you," responded the landlady; and then, putting the rushlight into York's hand, she bid him good night, with a pleasant wish that he would find his sweetheart happy and in gay health next morning.

The latch of the door appeared to be jammed. York struggled with it for some time, but could not succeed in lifting it. Meanwhile, he heard Mr. Worksop, who was manifestly a seafaring man, calling from the bed several varieties of sea-blessings upon the eyes and limbs of his disturber, until, losing all patience, he bawled out in the tones of a gale of wind—

"Put your shoulder to the latch and heave it up! Thunder and blood! ain't it plain that prising's your only tack?"

York did as he was told, and by so doing lifted the crazy old door off its latch, and entered.

He found himself in a little room, with the ceiling but a very few inches above his head. The apartment was almost entirely filled by a large, black, funereal four-poster, undraped, and furnished with a perfect Atlantic Ocean of blanket, mattress, and coverlet. On the left side of this immense bed lay a man, of whom nothing more was visible than a curiously elongated face, as though his countenance had been stretched, lengthening the lineaments out of all proportion to their breadth. This odd face was crowned with a large red handkerchief, so twisted over the head as to serve as a nightcap. The clothes of a nautical man of that age lay heaped upon a chair under the very

little window which gave light and ventilation to the room.

"Sorry to break in upon your rest, Mr. Worksop," exclaimed York; "but needs must, you know. But for your kindness, my bed to-night might have been on the cold ground, I fear. Deal's amazingly full, certainly."

"Very welcome, very welcome," growled Mr. Worksop, in a somewhat softened voice, staring over the edge of the bedclothes with small, windy, deep-set eyes at the long hair and tall figure of the young fellow. "There's room enough; only be so good as to bear a hand and tumble aboard, for I don't feel up to the knocker to-night, and there's been row enough going on downstairs since I've lain here to make a dead man get up and shoulder his coffin for a cruise arter peace."

York fell to undressing as expeditiously as possible.

"What's your calling, may I ask?" inquired Mr. Worksop, rumbling out the question with his mouth half covered with the bedclothes.

"A sailor," was the answer.

"What ship, sir?"

"Well, I was second mate of the *Cælia*, but sickened at Valparaiso of some pestilence there, and was left behind by the master. I was down six months with the malady, and nearly a dead man. Then the captain of the brig *Jane* offered to carry me home on condition of my helping him in the navigation of the vessel—I mean, taking observations and keeping the reckoning and the like, for he had lost his chief-mate, and his second, who was the ship's carpenter, couldn't read or write. We brought up in the Downs this evening; and as my sweetheart lives within a few hours' walk of this place, I came ashore, meaning to start for her home at dawn to-morrow. Small chance of my disturbing you,

Mr. Worksop; you'll find me cat-like, and won't know I'm gone till you turn to look."

"Right you are, sir; right you are," rumbled the other. "There's room enough here. Why, boil me alive, oh! but this must have been a royal bed of state in its day."

"I'll blow out this light," said York. "But have you a tinder-box handy, Mr. Worksop? I'm without that convenience—without a good deal that should have been mine but for Valparaiso. It's well to be able to strike a light; one never knows what may happen."

"There's my jacket on that cheer," answered Mr. Worksop; "you'll find what you want in the left-hand pocket."

York felt, and found the things, placed them near the rushlight, extinguished it, and got into bed.

They lay talking for a while. Mr. Worksop, it seems, had been boatswain of a West Indiaman for three voyages. He had been paid off in London a week or two before, and having been born at Deal, had run down to spend a few days at the old spot, and to take a short cruise about the district. He was too sleepy to talk much, but it was plain, from the little he let fall, that he was a man who had used the ocean for many years, and had much that was moving and interesting to tell, whenever he should feel disposed to deliver himself of his experiences. Presently he began to wander, then to snore. York lay awake for some time, listening to the hum and roll of the voices of the drinkers in the room below. There was an oil lamp just outside the window, which threw a dim illumination sufficiently clear to render faintly visible the outlines of objects. The young fellow rested, lost in thought, with his mind going to his sweetheart, from whom he had been parted

fourteen months; then to his prospects in life; the offer made him by the captain of the *Jane*; his chances of getting the money due to him from the owners of the *Coelia*, and the like; and then the noises below quieting with the departure one by one of the revellers, he closed his eyes and was presently asleep.

He was awakened by a sense of suffocation, and found himself bathed in perspiration and panting for breath under the weight of the bedclothes. The boatswain was snoring heavily. All was silent out of doors, saving at intervals the moan of a gentle gust of wind, like a long human sigh, running through the stealthy seething sound of the midnight waters pouring upon the shingle. He sat upright for the relief of the posture; but whether it was that the Valparaiso fever was not yet out of him, or that his condition rendered him particularly sensitive to atmospheric conditions, he found the temperature of the room insupportable. Indeed, the little compartment was nearly all bedstead. The lungs of the boatswain, to judge by his breathing, seemed to require the air of the open ocean to fill them. There was an odour of flue, too, along with a tepid flavour of blanket, that was as stifling in its way as the atmosphere of a bakehouse.

The young fellow quietly got out of bed with the design of opening the window, but found the casement, as the door had been, a sort of fixture, whose dislocation must result in the waking of the whole house. He pined for a drink of water, but there was no jug or washing apparatus in the room, and it was manifest that gentlemen who put up at the Lonely Star were to expect no better convenience than an outdoor pump for their ablutions. Now, the Lonely Star was sure to have a pump of its own as well as a back-yard; and the fancy

of a drink of cold water, coupled with a short spell of breathing the dewy night air, worked so irresistibly in the feverish young man that he resolved, at all hazards, to explore for the relief he panted for. He put before his fancy a figure of the house, and kept in his mind the bearings of the staircase and the public room he had entered. He could recall that, whilst seated in that room, he had taken notice of a glass door screened with red curtains at the extremity of it, with a white step between it and the floor. This, he made sure, led into the back-yard, where, though he should not meet with a pump, he was certain to obtain fresh air.

He partially clothed himself; but, on trying the door, found he could not lift the latch with his fingers. He felt in his pockets, but was without anything to enable him to prise open the jammed and rusty arrangement. The boatswain snored heavily in the soundest sleep. York, dreading the fellow's temper should he awaken him, walked softly to the man's clothes, and, by the feeble light that shone upon the little window, groped in the pockets for any contrivance that should serve him as a lever. The jacket pockets contained nothing but a tobacco-case, a pipe, and some papers. He felt in the left hand breeches' pocket, and touched a quantity of pieces of money, the weight of which proved them to be gold, apparently guineas and half-guineas. In the other pocket was a large clasp-knife such as sailors carry, with a ring through the end of the haft for a laniard.

York took this knife, went to the door, and succeeded in lifting the latch; and this done, he stole forth, leaving the door ajar. Then, putting the knife in his pocket, he groped his way downstairs all very quietly, as he did not wish to disturb the house. The street lamp that had helped him in the bedroom served him below

wherever there was a seaward-facing window, and he made his way without difficulty through the long, low-ceiled public room, reeking and sickening with the lingering fumes of tobacco and rum punch ; and pulling back the single bolt of the glass door he had taken notice of, he found himself in a little back-yard with, sure enough, the outline of a pump in the corner faintly touched by the starlight.

He drank and bathed his hands and face, and felt himself greatly refreshed. There was an inverted tub close to the pump, upon which he rested himself, and here he continued to linger for some time, reluctant to quit the sweetness and freshness of the cool air that was breathing direct from the sea for the oven-like oppressiveness of the little bedroom. Maybe he dozed, for he was suddenly startled by the near drowsy voice of a watchman calling the hour, two o'clock. On hearing this he arose, re-entered the house, quietly bolted the glass door after him, and returned to his bedroom.

IV.

THE name of the landlady with the apple-red cheeks and array of white chins was Mrs. Mate, and this good woman had received instructions from Mr. Worksop, the boatswain, from the first day on which he had arrived, to call him every morning whilst he slept at her house at seven o'clock, neither sooner nor later ; and to have his breakfast of small-beer, rashers of ham, cheese, red herrings, and brown bread ready for him in the little front parlour downstairs punctually by a quarter to eight. Mrs. Mate was always careful to humour such

sailors as stayed at her house with money in their pockets. Mr. Worksop had now used the *Lonely Star* for five days continuously, not to speak of his being a regular customer whenever in those parts; and in those five days he had spent his money handsomely, begrudging himself nothing, tippling with a quarter-deck rather than a fore-castle taste, and there was good prospect of his remaining in the house until the following Wednesday.

When next morning came, then, exactly at the hour of seven, Mrs. Mate went up the somewhat darksome staircase that led to the chamber in which Mr. York and Mr. Worksop had slept, and knocked at the door. She received no answer. She was not surprised, for Mr. Worksop was a stout sleeper, apart from his trick of going to bed with his skin full. She knocked again, and yet again, accompanying her blows by a vigorous kicking; and failing to receive any sort of reply, she lifted the latch of the door—understanding, of course, as the landlady of the house, the trick of opening it—and walked in.

It was broad sunny daylight outside, but the little window set close under the ceiling admitted but a pitiful light. However, at one glance Mrs. Mate was able to see that the bed was empty. She was prepared to find the boatswain alone, knowing, as we have seen, that Mr. York meant to start for his sweetheart at daybreak; but on glancing around, she observed that not only was Mr. Worksop gone, but his clothes likewise. This was unusual. She stepped to the bed, and more through habit, perhaps, than with design, she pulled down the bedclothes, which lay somewhat in a huddle on the side the boatswain had occupied, and instantly uttered a loud squeal of fear and horror.

There was a great stain of blood upon the sheet,

with smaller stains round about it, that seemed to be sifting out even as she watched them like a newly dropped blob of ink upon blotting-paper. Mrs. Mate squealed out a second time even more loudly than before, following the outcry by an hysterical shriek of "Murder! murder!" meanwhile noting, with eyes enlarged to twice their circumference by fright, that there was a pool of blood on the floor on the side where the boatswain had lain, with other marks which vanished at the door.

So shrill-voiced a woman as Mrs. Mate could not squeal twice at the top of her pipes and yell "Murder! murder!" also without exciting alarm. The first to rush upstairs was her husband, an old man in a white nightcap, an aged frill-shirt, and a pair of plum-coloured breeches. He was followed by the drawer, by a couple of wenches who had been busy cleaning rooms downstairs, and by five or six sailors, who came running out of the adjacent bedrooms on hearing Mrs. Mate's cries. Grasping her husband by the back of his neck, the landlady pointed to the bed, and exclaimed: "Mr. Worksop has been murdered! murdered, Joe, I tell you! Blood in our house! Murder done in the Lonely Star!"—uttering which, she fell upon the floor in a swoon, but contrived to rally before her husband seemed able to grasp the meaning of what she had said.

One of the two wenches instantly slipped away to give the news. A cold-blooded murder was no common occurrence in Deal. A Customs' man found dead with a slug through his heart, the body of a smuggler washing ashore with a ghastly cutlass-wound upon his head, the corpse of a gagged "blockader" at the foot of the Foreland Height, were mere business details, necessary items of a programme that was full of death, hard

weather, miraculous escapes, murderous conflicts; but a cool midnight assassination was a genuine novelty in its way, and in a very few minutes, thanks to the serving-maid, the pavements outside the inn, the passage, the staircase, the tragic bedroom itself, were crowded with hustling men and women, eagerly talking, the hinder ones bawling to those ahead for news, and the whole rickety place threatening to topple down with the weight of so many people.

The story soon gathered a collected form. It was known that, about nine o'clock on the previous evening, a tall young fellow, with his hair curling upon his back, had applied at the Lonely Star for a bedroom, and was admitted by consent of Mr. Worksop to a share of the great bed in which that worthy lay. It got to be known, too, in a wonderfully short space of time that Mr. Worksop carried in his breeches' or other pockets, some thirty or forty guineas and half-guineas loose, a handful of which he had exhibited with uncommon satisfaction on several occasions when overtaken in liquor. It also got to be known in an also equally incredibly short space of time, thanks to one of the watermen who had rowed Mr. York ashore from the brig *Jane*, that the tall young man with the long hair had owned himself worth only half a guinea, of which he had given four shillings to the boatman after a tedious dispute, one to the landlady for his bed, and a sixpenny bit for liquor, leaving him with five shillings—all the money he had in the world, according to his own admission; "and quite enough," exclaimed a deep voice amidst the jostle of men on the staircase, "to account for this here murder."

Presently, there was a cry of "Room for Mr. Jawker!" The crowd made a lane, and there entered a round, fat, fussy little justice of the peace, with the

only constable that Deal possessed—a tall, gaunt, powerfully built though knock-kneed man, in a rusty three-cornered hat, and a long stick—following close at his heels. Little Mr. Jawker approached the side of the bed, and after taking a long look, full of knowingness, at the blood-stains, he ordered the constable, giving him the name of Budd, to clear the room of all save those who could throw light upon this matter. This being done, Mr. Jawker fell to questioning the assembled folks, and bit by bit gathered as much of the story as they could relate. The landlady, Mrs. Mate, was ignorant of the name of the tall young man with the long hair; but he told her, she informed his Worship, that he meant to leave her house before daybreak that morning, to be in time to breakfast with his sweetheart, who lived Sandwich way, and who was none other, as she supposed, than pretty little Jenny Bax, for 'twas the widow Bax's name he mentioned when he spoke of walking over to his love at dawn.

At this point there was a disturbance outside. Budd the constable looked out, and presently looked in again to inform Mr. Jawker that fresh prints of bloodstains had been discovered on the pavement, and could be traced some distance.

"They must be followed! They must be followed!" cried little Mr. Jawker; "they may lead us to the discovery of the body of the murdered man. Follow me, Budd!" with which he went downstairs, the gaunt immense constable close behind him, and the people shouldering one another in pursuit of both.

There was a great crowd outside. Deal was but a little place in those days; indeed, it is but a little place now, and the news of the murder—if murder it were—had spread with something of the rapidity of the sound

of a gun. It was a sparkling morning, a small westerly draught rippling the sea into the flashing of diamonds under the soaring sun, the Downs filled with ships as on the previous day, the white front of the Foreland gleaming like silk upon the soft liquid azure past it, with, noblest sight of all, the line-of-battle ship, the central feature of the mass of craft, in the act of tripping her anchor and flashing into a broad surface of canvas with her long bowsprit and jib-booms to head to the north and east presently for a cruise as far as Heli-goland.

The instant the little justice of the peace made his appearance, there arose a stormy hubbub of voices of men eager to point out the bloodstains. It was a tragedy that went too deep for merriment, yet one might have laughed at the eager postures of square-sterned boatmen bending in all directions in search of new links of the crimson chain of crime, as though a vessel full of treasure had gone to pieces close aboard the land on top of a furious inshore gale, and there were ducats and doubloons and pieces-of-eight in plenty to be found at the cost of a hunt amongst the shingle. So many inquiring eyes were sure to discover what was wanted. Stains, unmistakably of blood, could be followed at varying intervals from the pavement in front of the Lonely Star; then into the middle of Beach Street; then an ugly patch, as though the burden of the body had proved too heavy, and the bearer had paused to rest; afterwards, for a hundred paces, no sign; then half a score more of stains, that conducted the explorers to the timber extension that projected a little distance into the sea, and there of course the trail ended. Nothing could be more damnifying in the theory they suggested than these links of blood, starting from the bedside, and

terminating, so to speak, at the very wash of the water. It was universally concluded that the tall young man with the long hair, name unknown, who had slept with Mr. Worksop, had murdered that unfortunate boatswain for the sake of the guineas in his pocket; and under cover of the darkness of the night, had stealthily borne the corpse to the timber extension and cast it into the sea.

Mr. Jawker started off at a rapid pace, followed by the constable, to make out a warrant for the apprehension of the tall young man with the long hair for wilful murder; whilst a number of boatmen went to work with creeps or drags to search for the body in the vicinity of the beach; but though they persevered in their efforts till noon, watched by hundreds of people ashore as well as by the innumerable ships' crews who crowded the shrouds and tops to observe the result of this patient dredging, nothing more than a very old anchor, which was supposed to have belonged to one of Tromp's ships, was brought to light.

V.

THE world moved very slowly in those days, and Deal's solitary constable, Timothy Budd, had not fairly started for the house of the widow Bax on a road that would have brought him in time to the ancient and beautiful minster of Minster, until the clock in Deal church showed the hour to be a quarter before nine. He was mounted on a clumsy village cart, like to what Hogarth has more than once drawn, armed with the warrant, a full description of the tall young man—to the obtaining

of whose name from the brig *Jane*, still lying in the Downs, the magistrate objected on the grounds of delay—and animated with full conviction that he would find the malefactor at his sweetheart's house.

The old village cart was drawn by a lame horse, that was occasionally to be impelled into a brief staggering trot by the one-eyed driver who sat by Constable Budd's side, and who on occasions acted as assistant or "watch" to that worthy. A crowd followed the cart out of Deal, for the excitement was very great indeed; and many would have been glad to accompany the constable the whole distance; but this he would not suffer, sternly ordering them to turn about when they had proceeded half a mile, "lest," as he bawled out, "the criminal should catch scent of their coming and fly."

It was a drive of five or six miles. Constable Budd stolidly puffed at his pipe, with now and again a glance at his heavy stick, and an occasional dive into his coat-pocket, where jingled a massive pair of gyves or handcuffs, for such ease of mind, maybe, as the chill of the iron could impart to him. Seawards, where the blue of the ocean showed steeping to the golden bank of the Goodwin Sands, hung the huge white cloud of the line-of-battle ship, scarce stemming the slack westerly tide, though every cloth was abroad with studding-sails far overhanging her black sides and grinning batteries. Little was said by the two men as they jogged along between the hedgerows and past the sand-downs on that rosy and sparkling September morning, saving that when they were nearing Sandwich, Budd's mate turned and said to him: "Timothy, it's the long chap, as he's described, as slept with the bo'sun, that you're to take, ain't it?"

"Oy," said the other, with a slap at his breast, where lay the warrant.

"But who's to know," said the driver, "that it wasn't the bo'sun as killed the long chap?"

"If you'd heered what was said, you wouldn't ask such a question," answered Budd. "I knew Mr. Worksop. He wor a proper gentleman. Mr. Worksop worn't a man to shed the blood of a flea. Whoy, look here—the long chap comes ashore wanting money, and he goes to bed with a man with noigh hand forty guineas in gold. It speaks for itself, Willum; it speaks for itself. Now, then, probe this old clothes-horse, will 'ee? We shall be all noight at this pace."

They rumbled through the streets of Sandwich, over the quaint old structure that bridged the little river of Stour; then to the left, into the flat plains—dashed here and there with spaces of trees—that stretched pretty nearly level all the way to Canterbury; and as the great globular watch in Constable Budd's breeches' pocket pointed to the hour of ten, the cart came to a halt opposite one of a group of cottages—the prettiest of them all, a little paradise of creepers and green bushes and small quickset hedge, shadowed behind with trees, with the dark glass of the windows sparkling in tiny suns through the vegetation, and the air round about sweet with a pleasant farmyard smell, and melodious with the voices of birds and the bleating and lowing of cattle in the distance.

Budd and his man got out of the cart, threw the reins over a post, and walked to the house door. It stood open. With a mere apologetic blow upon it with his fist, the constable marched in, and swiftly peeping into a room on the lefthand side, and noting that it was vacant, he turned the handle of a door on the right of

the passage and stood in the threshold, filling the frame with his gaunt, knock-kneed figure and huge skirts.

A little table was laid for breakfast; the room was savoury with the smell of eggs and bacon and coffee. Half risen from his chair was the figure at York, a table-knife in his hand, a frown of amazement and indignation upon his brow; confronting him was a comely old lady in mourning, half risen too, and staring with terrified eyes and pale cheeks at the constable and the one-eyed face that showed over his shoulder. Close to York was his sweetheart, Jenny Bax, an auburn-haired little woman of eighteen, with soft dark eyes and girlish figure and breast of snow scarcely concealed by the kerchief that covered her shoulders.

"It's the Deal constable!" cried the comely old lady.

"What do you want?" exclaimed York, slowly rearing himself to his full stature.

"*You!*" thundered Budd. "Put that knoife down."

York did so with an expression of amazement. The constable produced his warrant.

"I'm here," he cried, "to arrest you for the wilful murder, oither last night or in the small hours this morning, of Gabriel Worksop, mariner, who shared his bed with 'ee and who's missing."

He thrust his hands into his pocket with a look behind him, and in a breath almost, so quickly was it done, he and his assistant had thrown themselves upon York and handcuffed him. Ten minutes later, York, pinioned in the cart, between Budd and the driver, was being leisurely conveyed to Sandwich jail, whilst the widow Bax hung weeping bitterly over the form of her daughter Jenny, who lay motionless and marble-white, as though dead, upon the floor.

VI.

WHEN York was searched, they found in his coat pocket a large clasp-knife with a ring through the end of it, capped (where the ring was) by a mounting of copper such as formerly might protect the butt-end of a pistol, upon which the words "Gabriel Worksop" were rudely scored. The knife looked to have been newly cleaned. There was no stain of blood or anything approaching such a mark visible upon it. In the pocket where this knife was they found a Spanish gold piece minted in the year 1690, with a hole through it, as though the coin was used as a charm or an ornament. His bundle contained merely a few trifles of wearing apparel. They also found upon him four shillings in English money and other articles of no moment as evidence. But when they came to strip him, they found the left side of his shirt stained with blood.

All that he said was, he was innocent of the crime charged against him, but refused to declare more.

The first hearing was before the mayor of Sandwich and a bench of magistrates. The room was crowded. Never in the memory of the most ancient inhabitant had anything of the kind excited so much interest, not indeed in the district, but throughout the south-eastern portion of the county. It was universally agreed that Mr. Worksop had been murdered, and by whom, if not by Jeremy York? But, then, what had become of the body? The marks of blood proving that it had been dragged to the timber extension were conclusive enough; yet it was almost inevitable that a corpse thrown into shallow water close inshore should be set upon some

part of the beach by the action of the tide, unless weighted by a heavy sinker, in which case there would be a chance for the grapnel. But day after day, a broad tract, stretching from Deal Castle to Sandown Castle, had been swept without result. Would completer evidence be forthcoming? Would York confess or make some admission that might help to solve the mystery?

The landlady of the *Lonely Star*, along with other witnesses, proved that the knife and the gold coin had belonged to Mr. Worksop. The landlady stated that she had frequently handled the coin, and that on the day preceding his disappearance or death, she had asked him to sell it to her; but he replied that it had been given to him by a sweetheart twenty years before, and that he would not part with it for a ton of gold. She and other witnesses also testified to Mr. Worksop having been in possession of some thirty or forty guineas, which in his cups he had a trick of lugging out by the handful, that the company might know a jolly sailor need never be a pauper. The two boatmen that had rowed Jeremy York ashore gave evidence that he confessed he was only worth half a guinea, that there was a quarrel over the fare, and that they had to be satisfied with four shillings.

York's statement, on the other hand, was as follows: He said that on the night in question he fell asleep, after having lain with the boatswain for about an hour. He was then awakened by the oppression of the atmosphere, which made him fear that he would suffocate; and being parched with thirst, besides desperately fevered by the atmosphere, he resolved to seek for the inn's back-yard, where he might hope to find a pump, and where he would be sure of the relief of fresh air. As he could not lift the latch of the door, he searched Mr. Worksop's clothes, not choosing to disturb the man,

who had shown himself querulous and grumbling, as though in pain, and found a knife, with which he succeeded in opening the door. It was a little past two o'clock when he returned to his bedroom; a faint light penetrated the window from the oil lamp outside, which enabled him to see that the bed was empty. He also took notice that Mr. Worksop's wearing apparel, that had lain upon a chair, was gone. He was somewhat surprised, but concluded that Mr. Worksop had been awakened, as he himself had, by the heat, had dressed and walked forth into the night, and that he would return presently. He got into bed again, but lay sleepless, until, hearing some distant clock strike four, he rose, clothed himself, took his bundle, and left the house, carrying away the boatswain's knife, which he would have left behind, had he remembered that it was in his pocket. He was unable to account for his possession of the Spanish piece of gold, which the witnesses swore had belonged to Mr. Worksop; nor could he explain how it was that there were bloodstains upon his shirt, in the bed, on the floor, not to mention the marks which terminated at the waterside.

Having heard the evidence, the magistrate committed him to take his trial for wilful murder at the forthcoming assizes to be held at Sandwich.

There was probably but one person living at that time who believed in Jeremy York's innocence, and this was his sweetheart Jenny Bax. The widow Bax, after much mental swaying to and fro, arrived at the conclusion that the youth was guilty. How could it be otherwise? she reasoned, as did all others who discussed the matter. The mysterious disappearance of Mr. Worksop—the knife and coin in York's pocket—the bloodstains, the incriminating marks discovered on him—if these

things did not point to his being the assassin of the unfortunate boatswain, what, in the name of truth, could they signify? But what had he done with the guineas, to obtain which, of course, he had committed the dreadful deed? Well, that was a thing not to be conjectured. It was strange, no doubt, that the money should not have been found upon him when he was searched; for one might well think that if he had been artful enough to conceal his booty somewhere on the road to the widow's cottage, he would have taken care to hide such damnifying testimonials to his guilt as the knife and the Spanish coin. But it is always through some oversight on the part of the evil-doer that he is brought to book. However it might be as regards the concealment of the guineas and the retention of the knife and coin, it was beyond all dispute manifest that Mr. Worksop lay somewhere secreted, a murdered man, and that York was his assassin.

Jenny alone believed in his innocence. She and her mother were poor; but had the widow been well-to-do, she would not have advanced a groat in defence of the man whom she believed a murderer. In the brief time that the lovers had been together before the arrival of the constable, York had told his sweetheart that he was in hope of obtaining the balance of his wages as second mate from the owner of the *Cælia*; and this coming into Jenny's mind whilst her sweetheart lay in Sandwich jail, she wrote imploringly to the owners of the brig, spoke of the terrible charge that had been brought against Mr. Jeremy York, and how neither of them had funds to enable them to procure counsel; and she prayed them, with all the might of her little bursting heart, to send her the money her sweetheart said was owing to him, that some effort might be made to rescue

him from the gibbet. In response to this piteous entreaty, the owners of the brig sent her fifteen guineas, with which money she hastened to Canterbury, and there engaged the services of the likeliest lawyer that that ancient city contained. This lawyer had several interviews with York, and he was candid enough to represent to Jenny Bax that, though he would do his best, there was little or no hope. Beyond his solemn assurance of innocence, coupled with the carelessness, which certainly did not look criminal, of his suffering the knife and coin to remain in his pocket, the young man seemed incapable of stating a single point upon which the defence could rely or which it could make anything of. And it turned out as the sagacious lawyer had predicted: the evidence that had been previously tendered was gone over again, and far more diligently examined; the blood-stained shirt, the knife, the coin, were produced. The landlady of the Lonely Star, along with her husband and six other witnesses, was present to testify to the coin, to the knife (though the name scored upon it abundantly indicated the ownership), to the money in possession of the boatswain at the time of his disappearance, to the circumstance of Jeremy York having shared the bed with him, to the avowed poverty of the young man, to the blood-marks terminating at the timber extension, from which point, beyond all question, the corpse had been thrown into the sea.

The judge summed up, making but little of the circumstance of what he referred to as the heedlessness of York in retaining upon his person such incriminating articles as the knife and the coin. The jury conferred a few moments without withdrawing and returned a verdict of "Guilty." Whereupon his lordship put on

the black cap, and after a tedious sermon on the hideousness of the crime for which the prisoner was to suffer, sentenced him to be hanged by the neck until he was dead.

VII.

IN the days in which Jeremy York flourished, the gibbet was a much less conventional detail of the civilization of the century than the gallows now is. Pirates and blood-stained smugglers were, to be sure, hanged in chains upon gallows erected on Thames mud. Execution Dock and the lower reaches were fixed points in Jack Ketch's programme, when it came to maritime tragedies or felonies committed in the home waters round about the coast within convenient distance; but the ordinary land-going felon was again and again "turned off" in places adjacent to the scene of his wrong-doing. There seemed, to the old-fashioned intelligence, a sort of poetical justice in hanging a man within view of the spot where, according to the ferocious laws of those days, he had earned his bitter title to the halter.

In conformity, then, with this practice, it was decided that Jeremy York should be hanged on a gibbet erected within musket-shot of Sandown Castle; that is to say, within a mile or so of the old wooden structure on to which he had dragged the bleeding body of the hapless boatswain, and from which, with horrid secrecy, he had committed it to the sea.

It was a windy melancholy morning, sombre with the stoop of dusky weeping clouds sweeping out of the north-east, with an edge of frost in their occasional showering of wet. The sea ran a dark hard green under their

shadow, with a ghastly glare of froth along the horizon where the surf was boiling upon the Goodwin Sands. The sandhills were dusky with crowds of people, who had assembled to witness the fine show of a hanged man; many full of curiosity, congregated close about the gibbet, that stood black and horrible, like a hideous signpost pointing the road to death, with the rope swayed by the wind dangling from the extremity of it. But the mass of the mob seemed to give it a pretty wide berth, as though it was an object to be best admired from afar.

One might have noticed, however, that amongst the people who lingered in the immediate vicinity of what used to be called the fatal tree, was a knot of some eight or ten persons, whom the least observant eye might have suspected were present from a motive that had but little reference to curiosity. They were most of them young men, with a certain air of resolution in their manner. They conversed very earnestly. They might have been observed to measure the height of the arm of the gibbet from the ground, the length of the rope, and the space from where the noose would be, when the end of it had been coiled about the neck, to the sand beneath. Some time before the arrival of the felon, a woman of slight figure, in deep mourning, her face concealed by a veil, came to the steadfast group of men, conversed with them for a few minutes, then broke away, sobbing passionately, and was seen to walk hurriedly in the direction of Sandwich. It was whispered amongst the crowd that she was Jenny Bax, the murderer's sweetheart; and several females who recognized her as she walked away, exclaimed that, for all her mourning and veils, she could not but be an unfeeling person to come and view the gibbet where her sweetheart was

to be strangled, even if she had not made up her mind to witness the whole scene from behind one of those sandhills she was skirting in such a hurry.

A little before eleven o'clock, a murmur ran through the crowd like the cry of a wave breaking aslant along a mile of shore. The procession was in view! a horse and cart, in which were seated York the malefactor, the chaplain of the jail exhorting him, and the hangman sitting behind, with his legs over the edge, fortifying his spirits with a sly dram from time to time from a flat bottle which he drew from his pocket, for this was a country pageant, with nothing but rooks, and here and there a farmyard labourer, as sightseers; no crowded progress, such as that from Newgate to Tyburn, or Newcastle jail to the town moor. On one side of the cart walked the sheriff, on the other, three constables, one of whom was Budd, and a small detachment of helpers after the pattern of the one-eyed man. Jeremy York sat cold and silent, grey as tobacco ash, habited in the clothes he wore when taken. He held his eyes bent downwards; his lips were compressed into two bloodless lines. He gave no heed to the chaplain, who mumbled in his ear. He had only spoken once since he had entered the cart, and that was to say to the Ordinary: "Sir, before God, I am innocent." All the while he lay waiting for the day of execution he had said no more.

The cart rolled up to the gibbet, and the constables and helpers drove the crowd into a circle round it. It was thought that York would make a speech, but he held his peace, never looking up. His arms were pinioned; the hangman hitched the end of the rope round his neck; the chaplain prayed earnestly and devoutly; the crowd held their breath, and not a sound broke the dreadful stillness saving the dreary sweep of

the wind over the sandhills and the seething and hissing of the breakers rising and falling upon the shingle. The sheriff then gave the signal; the driver who held the horse's head started the animal, the cart rolled away, and left Jeremy York hanging.

But scarce had he swung to an erect posture under the gibbet, when it was observed that the hangman had not allowed for his considerable stature; his toes touched the ground. But ere the crowd could well distinguish this, the group of men whom the veiled woman in black had conversed with gathered round the suspended figure in such a way as partly to support it. The sheriff, conversing with the hangman, looked away; no notice was taken of the action of these people, for it was a common custom in those days for friends of a malefactor to gather about him, after he had been "turned off," to shore him up, and to do their best to keep him from strangling during the half-hour in which he dangled. The crowd looked on; what the group of men were trying to effect they might have guessed; but whether the criminal should be ultimately saved or immediately throttled was all the same to the mob, as it was apparently to the sheriff. It was an execution anyway; this was the sight that the people of Deal and Sandwich and of adjacent hamlets had covered the sandhills to witness, and be the issue of the spectacle what it would, there was nothing to disappoint them in the representation of it.

At the expiration of half an hour, time was called by one of the men who crowded round the motionless body; the sheriff signed to the executioner, who, springing forward, severed the rope, and the body fell into the outstretched arms of those about it. A minute after, a small cart, containing a shell, was brought to the

gibbet, the body was placed in it, five men of the group who had clustered about the pendent form jumped into the cart, and within a few moments the vehicle was being driven rapidly in the direction of Sandwich.

VIII.

EIGHT months have passed, and the scene is now on the broad equinoctial ocean, with the fiery atmosphere of the Antilles in every cat's-paw that tarnishes the polished heaving mirror, let the faint air blow whence it will; a sky of copper brightening into blinding dazzle round about the sun that, at his meridian shines almost directly over the mast-heads, and transforms the vast spread of sea into a sheet of white fire, trembling into the blue distance faint with the haze of heat.

There was a small West Indiaman named the *City of Glasgow* that had been lying stagnated on these fervid parallels for hard upon four days. There was no virtue in awnings, in wetted decks, in gaping skylights, in open portholes, and the heels of windsails to render the atmosphere of the 'tween-decks and cabin tolerable to the people aboard the ship. The air was sickly with the smell of blistered paint, the brass-work was fiery hot, and took the skin off the hand that for a moment unconsciously touched it; the pitch was like putty between the seams; the fresh water in the scuttle-butts was warm as newly drawn milk, but quite without dairy fragrance. It was time, indeed, for the wind to blow. The mere detention was nothing in those pleasant times of groping. In cooler climes the mate would have been satisfied to whistle for wind for a month, and go below

every time his watch was up with a feeling that he had done everything that was necessary, and that all was well. But the heat made an enforced resting-place under the Cuban heights insufferable.

It was half-past eight o'clock in the morning watch ; the hands had come up from breakfast and were distributed on various jobs about the deck. There was not a breath of air ; but there was a run of glassy folds from the south-west, which within the past hour had somewhat increased in weight ; and upon these long-drawn heavings, the ship, that was a mere tub in form, as all vessels were in those days, saving, perhaps, the piratical *barco longos*, rolled as regularly as a pendulum swings, swelling out her canvas to one lurch, only to bring it in to the masts again at the next with sounds like the explosions of nine-pounders in the tops.

The captain of the *City of Glasgow* was a small fiery-faced man, with deep-set eyes that glowed like cairngorms under the shaggy thatches of the brows, a nose that not a little resembled a small carrot both in shape and hue, and a mouth with a set of the lips that indicated a highly peppery temper. He walked to the mate, who stood near the wheel fanning himself with a great straw hat.

"When is this going to end, sir?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Blood, sir! Is there no limit to calms? Thunder and slugs! If this goes on, we must tow—d'ye see, *tow*, I say—get the long-boat over and crowd her with men. What though they frizzle? We must get out of this, or——"

He was probably about to launch into a piece of profanity, but he was interrupted by a cry coming down from aloft, delivered by a man who had been sent on to

the mainroyal yard to repair some defect that the vigilant eye of the boatswain had detected: "Sail ho!"

The little fiery-faced captain started, and looked as if he scarcely credited his hearing; then, running to the rail, he thrust his head clear of the awning and bawled up to the fellow, "Where away?"

"Right astarn," was the answer of the man, swinging with one hand from the tie as he pointed with the other directly over the taffrail to the gleaming haze of sea-line there.

"Well," said the skipper, "that should be a sign there's wind somewhere about."

"It is some craft," said the mate, "that may be bringing a draught of air along with her."

"Don't talk of a *draught* of air, sir," said the captain passionately; "what we want is wind, sir, a fresh breeze—a gale—a howling hurricane, by thunder! H'an't we had enough of cat's-paws? Draught of air!" he muttered under his breath, with a look of loathing in his eyes as he made them meet in a squint upon the compass-card.

But the mate was right on one side of his remark, at all events. What the fellow aloft had sighted proved to be a ship climbing the shining slope to the impulse of a breeze; but it was not until her royals were trembling like stars above the horizon, with nothing else under them showing, that the people of the *City of Glasgow* caught sight of the line of wind darkening the waters in the south-west. In half an hour's time it was blowing into the canvas of the West Indiaman, raising a pretty tinkling sound of running waters all around her; and though it came warm as the human breath, yet, after the long spell of hot and tingling calm, it put a sense of coolness into each fevered cheek turned grate-

fully to the quarter whence it came. If ever the crew of the *City of Glasgow* desired an illustration of the ponderous sailing qualities of the clumsy old castellated waggon they navigated, they might have found it in the rapid growth of the stranger astern. By noon she had risen to the reefband of her forecourse, with her flying jib yearning fair over the water-line. She was clearly making the same course as the West Indiaman. Indeed, it took rather the form of a pursuit, for when first seen she was apparently heading to the north-west; but scarcely had the West Indiaman to the first of the breeze trimmed yards for the north-east, than the stranger was observed to also haul her wind.

The fiery little captain did not like it. What was she? A Spaniard? A Frenchman? A Dutchman? He packed on studding-sails, but to no purpose, for the fellow astern came along hand over hand, as though her crew were warping her up to a stationary object. Presently she was showing fair on the water, a big yellow craft, with great curling headboards and a double line of batteries. Then, when she was plain in view, puff! blew a white ball of smoke from a forechaser, followed by the dull thud of the distant gun; and a minute after, the mate, who was working away at her through a long perspective glass of the period, cried out that she had hoisted the Union Jack at her fore.

"Well, and what's that to me?" bawled the fiery little captain. "Anybody observe if that gun was shotted?" There was no answer. "What do they mean by shooting at us? Wounds, but it may be a trap! Hoist away our colours, and keep all fast."

Five minutes later, the stranger fired again; but, observing that no notice was taken of the summons, she waited until she was within range, then, yawing, let

drive with such good aim as to bring the West Indian's mizzen topgallant-mast down with a run. The sight of the wreckage struck panic into the soul of the little fiery captain.

"Down stun'-sails; man the braces!" he roared; "bring her to, or he'll founder us."

In a few moments the *City of Glasgow* lay with her foretopsail to the mast, docilely waiting for what was to happen.

It was not long before the ship had ranged alongside, and she then proved to be a great fifty-gun man-of-war, an Englishman on a West Indian cruise, with crowds of pigtailed heads looking over her bulwarks forward, and a quarter-deck brilliant with the quaint naval uniforms of that day—if, indeed, it can be said that any approach to a uniform was then established. A stout man in a cocked-hat, white silk stockings, handsomely laced coat, and a big white wig, mounting on to the rail of the man-of-war, clapped a huge copper speaking-trumpet to his lips and bawled out, "Ship ahoy! What ship are you?"

The little peppery captain sprang on to a hen-coop and answered, "The *City of Glasgow* of London, from Havana."

"Keep your topsail to the mast; I'll send a boat," cried the other.

"A boat?" cried the little chap, turning to his mate. "What does he want to send a boat for? Does he question my papers? Zounds! if there be any sort of law still a-going in the old country, I'll make him pay for that mess up there;" and he sent a fiery glance at his topgallant-mast.

The boat plunged from the man-of-war's side; a crowd of sturdy fellows armed to the teeth jumped into

her; a young marine exquisite, with a hanger on his hip and a cambric pocket-handkerchief in his breast, his laced hat airily cocked upon his head, and a flash of jewels upon his fingers, took his place in the sternsheets, and with a few sweeps of the long oars, the boat was alongside. The dandy lieutenant stepped aboard.

"Why did you not heave to," he exclaimed in an affected drawl, "when you were summoned by our cannon?"

"How did I know what you fired for?" cried the irritable captain. "Look how you've served me;" and he pointed aloft.

"'Pon honour!" exclaimed the lieutenant, "you deserve that we should have sunk you." He applied the scented pocket-handkerchief to his nose, as though he could not support the smell of the hot pitch and blistered paint rising into the atmosphere from off the Indiaman, and exclaimed in a voice as if he should swoon, "Muster your men, sir, and for the Lud's sake, be quick about it."

The little captain, fully understanding the significance of this order, was about to remonstrate, but seemed to change his mind on catching the glance that was shot at him from under the seemingly sleepy lids of the languid, perfumed sea-dandy, and repeated the lieutenant's order to his mate, turning sulkily on his heels afterwards, and starting off into a sharp fiery walk betwixt the binnacle and the mizzen rigging.

The boatswain's pipe shrilled to the silent hollows of the canvas aloft; the men stood along the deck, and the lieutenant, with six armed seamen at his back, fell to picking and choosing. The man-of-war wanted twenty men to complete her complement, and of these the Indiaman must contribute ten. There was no help for

it; and the little captain had presently the mortification to witness ten of his best seamen descend the side with their bundles and bags and enter the boat, which forthwith carried them aboard the fifty-gun ship.

One of these ten men was a tall handsome young fellow, whom no one who had before known him could have failed to instantly recognize as Jeremy York, spite of his assumption of the name of Jem Marloe, of his hair being cut short in front and rolled into a tail down his back, and of the hue of it, that had been a sunny auburn, being now whitened as though dusted with powder. He was the second of the ten men to step on board. It was not only that he was the most conspicuous of them all by reason of his stature and beauty—for his frame had long since erected itself into its old manly port out of the stoop and depression of ill health; he was specially noticeable besides for an air of profound indifference. Most of the others glanced insolently and mutinously about them, savagely resentful of this impressment and of their liberty as merchant seamen being abruptly ended without regard to wages, to cherished hopes, to their homes, their wives, their sweethearts, their children ashore. A number of the ship's crew stood near the mainmast watching the new hands as they went forwards marshalled by the boatswain. On a sudden, Jeremy York was seen to come to a dead stand with his eyes fixed upon one of these sailors; his bundle fell from his hand, his face turned to a deathlike white, shiver after shiver chased his form; they saw his fingers convulsively working, and his eyes, filled with horror, dismay, incredulity, seemed to start from their sockets with the intensity of his stare. They believed he was seized with a fit; and would fall to the deck in a minute; and amongst those who sprang to his

assistance was the fellow on whom his gaze was riveted. He shrieked out at his approach, and fell upon one knee trembling violently, swaying to and fro, to and fro, with his hands pressed to his eyes in the posture of one wild almost to madness.

"Is the man ill?" bawled a lieutenant from the quarter-deck. "If so, bear him below, and let the surgeon attend him."

York staggered on to his legs, and looking at the man at first sight of whom he had appeared to have fallen crazy, he cried in a weak faltering voice, "Your name is Worksop? You were bo'sun of a West Indian."

The other, full of amazement, with a slow bewildered stare at York and then round upon his shipmates, answered in a hurricane note, "That's so: I ain't ashamed. My name's Worksop, and I was bo'sun of a West Indiaman, as ye say."

"Look at me!" cried York. "Oh, man, look at me! What have I suffered through you! Do not you remember me?"

Any one would have laughed outright to witness the perplexity that lengthened yet the longdrawn countenance of Worksop.

"What's all this?" cried the lieutenant in charge of the deck, coming forward angrily.

"Sir," shrieked York, "I have been hanged for the murder of that man!"

"Mad, by Heaven!" cried the lieutenant. "Sun-stroke, no doubt. Take the poor devil below, and see to him."

"Sir," cried York, clasping his hands, "I beg you to listen to me one minute. I am not mad, indeed. Mr. Worksop there will remember that one night about

eight months ago he gave me a share of his bed at an inn at Deal called the Lonely Star."

Worksop started and looked intently at the speaker.

"I quitted the bed to get some water; when I returned, my companion was gone. Blood was found in the bed; there were bloodstains down the staircase, along the roadway to the beach; there was blood upon my shirt, although, as God is my witness, I knew not how it came there. They found his knife upon me, which I had taken from his pocket whilst he slept to prise open the door with; and also a gold coin belonging to him they found, though how I came by it I vow, before Heaven, I know not; and on this evidence they hanged me!"

He faltered, hid his face, and fell to the deck in a dead faint.

"Hanged him—*hanged him—for me!*" shouted Worksop in the voice of a man about to suffocate. "Hanged him for *me!*" he repeated. "But, lor bless my soul and body! *I* was never murdered, mates!" and in a very ecstasy of astonishment, he hooked an immense quid out of his cheek and flung it overboard.

"Rally this poor fellow, some of you," exclaimed the lieutenant, and hastened aft to the captain to make his report.

A bucket of cold water topped with a dram of rum served to restore York to consciousness; and when he had his wits, he and Worksop were conducted by a midshipman to the captain's cabin.

"What is all this?" inquired the grey-haired commander, levelling a piercing glance at York, as though he had made up his mind to be confronted by a madman. "D'ye mean to tell us that you've been *hanged* for the murder of yonder seaman alongside of you?"

"Yes, sir, I've been hanged as his murderer;" and thus breaking the silence, York proceeded. He told his story in good language, plainly and intelligently, with an occasional catch of his breath, and a sob or two when he spoke of his sweetheart.

"You were hanged," cried the commander, watching him with a fascinated countenance, for the corroborative looks and nods of Worksop as York delivered his tale had soon abundantly satisfied the captain that the poor young fellow was speaking the truth—"you were hanged," he repeated, "strung up by your neck in the customary style, I suppose, and left to dangle for the usual time. And yet you are alive!"

"I am coming to that, sir," said York respectfully. "Everybody was against me whilst I lay in jail awaiting my trial at the assizes. But after I had been sentenced to be hanged, there came a bit of a change in some folks' minds—not that they doubted my guilt, but they thought it hard, perhaps, that a young fellow should die for a crime he swore he had never committed; that he should suffer death on no stronger evidence than some blood-marks, and a knife, and a coin, when by rights they should have found the murdered man's money upon him, besides making sure that he *was* dead," glancing as he spoke at Worksop, "by the discovery of his body. Sir, my sweetheart got to hear of this feeling and worked upon it, and got a number of young fellows to hang about the gibbet and shore me up, as is often done, I'm told, after the cart had been drawn away. The rope was too long—my feet touched the ground—that's what they told me. It all went black with me soon after I felt the tightness in my throat; and when I recovered my mind I found myself in a little cottage some way the Deal side of

Sandwich, with my sweetheart, Jenny, kneeling by my side, and a Sandwich barber letting blood from my arm. What was then to be done, sir, being a live man, but to get out of the country as fast as I could? Jenny helped to disguise me, gave me all the money she had, having spent what the owners of my ship had sent her on a lawyer to defend me at the trial; and walking as far as Ramsgate I found a vessel there that wanted a man, and, coming to the Thames after a coasting trip, I signed for the West Indiaman out of which I have just been pressed. That's the truth of the story, sir, as Heaven hears me."

Once again he hid his face, and his strong frame shook with a violent fit of sobbing. They waited until he had collected himself, burning as they were with curiosity to hear Worksop's story, for the solution of the amazing mystery must lie in *that*.

"And now, what's *your* yarn?" says the captain.

Worksop seemed to emerge with his prodigiously elongated countenance out of a very trance or stupefaction of astonishment. He wiped his brow, threw a bewildered look around, dried his lips, and began.

"Your honour," he said, "this is how it was; and I do hope Heaven 'll forgive me for being the cause of this poor gentleman's most tremendous sufferings. He comes to bed on that precious night all right, just as he says, and found me a bit growling and surly, I dessay, for the fact was, your honour, that same afternoon, unbeknown to anybody belonging to the Lonely Star, I'd called upon a barber that was a stranger to me to let me some blood for an ugly pain I had in the side; and when this poor young fellow came to bed, I was lying very uneasy with the smart of the wound the barber had made. Well, I fell asleep,

but was awakened by feeling my side cold and damp. There was light enough coming through the window, as this young man has already told your honour, to throw things out middling visible; and with half an eye I saw that I was bleeding badly, and that if I didn't look sharp I must lose more blood than I was ever likely to get back again. I dressed myself in a hurry, meaning to run round to the barber's house, that he might strap up the wound he had made in ship-shape fashion, just noticing, whilst I pulled on my clothes, that this young gentleman had left the bed, and was out of the room, though I scarce gave the matter a moment's heed, being too anxious to get the bleeding stopped to think of anything else. I bundled down the staircase, and as I arrived on the pavement a group of men pounced upon me. They were a press-gang from the first-rate, the *Thunderer*, lying in the Downs. I tried to make 'em understand my condition; but instead of listening, they turned to and gagged me, and carried me, dripping as I was, which they wouldn't take much notice of in the dark, down to a bit of a pier on the beach, tossed me into the boat, and put me aboard, where I was properly doctored after the wound came to be looked at. When I'd served two months aboard the *Thunderer*, they transferred me to a sloop, and afterwards drafted me into this here vessel, your honour; and that's the blessed truth," cried he, smiting the palm of his hand with his fist, "as I'm alive to tell it."

"Did you miss the knife?" inquired the commander.

"I did, your honour, when I came to feel in my pockets."

"And the Spanish gold coin?"

"I did, sir, to my sorrow. I had thirty-six guineas

in cash ; the money was all right ; but I'd have given it four times over to have got that Spanish bit back again."

"How do you account for your possession of it?" inquired the captain, addressing York.

"Why, your honour, I think I can explain that," cried Worksop, before the young fellow could answer. "I've no more belief that I was robbed of it than I have that I'm a murdered man. This will have been it, your honour. The blade of my knife was a bit worn, and there was a vacant length in the hollow of it when clasped. The coin must have got jammed into that vacancy. It would fit well, sir; mor'n once I have drawn out the knife with the coin stuck in it. There was nothen, I suppose, but the wish to keep that coin away from my other money that allowed me to let it lie in the pocket where my knife was."

"A wonderful story indeed," said the captain. "What is your name, my man?"

"Jeremy York, sir."

"It will be my duty to put you in the way of righting yourself with the law that has most grievously sinned against you, at the earliest opportunity. You can go forward now, both of you."

The captain of the man-of-war was as good as his word. On the arrival of the vessel at Havana he sent York and Worksop on board a king's ship that would be sailing for home in a few days. Out of his own purse he presented the young man with a handsome sum of money; whilst all hands, from the first-lieutenant down to the loblolly boy, subscribed dollars enough to handsomely tassel the handkerchief of the victim of circumstantial evidence. Further, the captain gave him a letter addressed to a relative of his holding an impor-

tant official position at the Admiralty, in which he related York's story at large, and begged him so to interest himself in the affair as to contrive that the unfortunate young man should have his character thoroughly re-established, along with such reparation from Government as influence could obtain.

The story is one hundred and thirty years old ; time has blackened the canvas ; one sees the singular picture but dimly, and such sequel as remains must be left to the imagination of the student of this blurred old-world piece. Yet tradition is not wholly unhelpful, for there is reason at least to believe that public emotion was sufficiently stirred by the representations of the broad-sheets and prints of those days to result in a sum of money considerable enough not only to enable Jeremy York to marry his faithful sweetheart Jenny Bax, but to free the young man from the obligation of going to sea for a living, and establish them both in a snug business in the neighbourhood of Limehouse.

JIMS REFORMATION.

"My father was over seventy when he died," began a sea-captain, with whom I was having a long yarn, in answer to my request to him to relate the story. "His memory in nautical matters went far back, as you may reckon when I tell you that it's over twenty years since the hatches closed over him. He had a very keen recollection, and was exact in what he said, and was one of the most conversable men that I can recall, full of stories, beginning pretty well with the year one of the present century, with experiences covering a score of extinct conditions of the maritime life, such as slaving, privateering, and the like, not to mention piracy; for he would talk grimly of one cruise under the black flag, but in a dark manner, and with a wooden face and a hint in the glance he shot at you, that if you wanted to raise his hump you need but ask him a question or two on that matter.

"He began as an apprentice when a mere boy, and worked his way up through all the grades, viewing every part of the world, and grappling with his calling in a manner that's no longer possible in these days of steam and swift despatch, change of shipmates, and general hurry, until he ended on the quarter-deck of a West Indiaman as skipper—a post of dignity in those times, for the passenger traders to the Antilles were a set of craft but a little less handsome and sumptuous

than the vessels of the East India Company. I have a painting of my father's last ship at home, and you shall see her when you call. Nothing is wanting: there are the gilded quarter-galleries sparkling with glass, a stern handsome as a French frigate's with its twisting of gilt devices, big windows, and the golden symbolism with which the shipwrights of that day loved to embellish their fabrics; masts soaring to the altitude of a liner's—But enough of this! Cooke's drawing of one of these craft is as perfect as can be; the mischief is that the foreshortening of the hull makes the vessel look absurdly oversparred.

"Well, sir, my father's yarn of the story of Jim's reformation used to run somewhat thus. You may take it for gospel—he was an eye-witness; and though it happened in 1824, yet his memory was so fine, and the impression produced upon him by the incident so lasting, that he would say, in relating it, he had but to close his eyes and the thing was before him as though it had happened but an hour or two ago. He was able seaman on board a schooner hailing from a West Indian port. She was a slaver, a superbly built craft for line and general grace, coppered to the bends, sitting long and low upon the water, the completest sea-beauty imaginable. She was one of the handsomest of the many handsome vessels dedicated to the most hellish trade the greed and cruelty of man ever devised. The obligation of escape was one of the inspirations of their construction. They had to rank as the swiftest things afloat, and when you get speed at sea, I mean under canvas, you will usually have beauty of form.

"She sailed for the Bonny River with a crew of sixteen hands all told, one of whom was my father; another a fellow named Jim Sawyer, an excellent seaman, but as

drunken, debauched a rascal as ever sailed the ocean; a scoundrel, who in his cups would hiccough out fifty horrible stories of his doings ashore and at sea, now as pirate, now as slaver, now as a mutineer, and so on. He was one of those brutes, in short, whose ambition as villains carries their tongues leagues ahead of the facts. Half of what he said he had done was what he would have liked to do; but he was innocent of it. His dates didn't tally. If he told the same yarn twice it was nearly always with a difference; and so he saved his neck, I believe, for, had his stories been credited, there was no doubt he would have been turned off on the evidence of his own brag.

"But as things stood he was bad enough. Oaths were never wanting in a slaver; but Jim's profanity topped even the skipper's. My father would say that, hardened as he was by years of association with all manner of rough, coarse, and brutal sailors, there were times when he would feel his very soul shrinking up within him whilst he listened to Jim Sawyer's recitals of his own heroic deeds, and to the unspeakable profanity of the language in which he delivered his stories.

"The schooner arrived in the river. She had been delayed by the necessity of keeping a bright look-out for an English sloop-of-war that was stationed somewhere off that part of the coast; but when she crossed the bar she had sailed to, and brought up abreast of a second point or elbow of shore heavily clothed with tropic growths which as effectually concealed her as though she had been hauled high and dry into the heart of the forest that thickened out the land into greenery for miles, there arrived a canoe with a greasy old Portuguese aboard dried up to the leathery, wrinkled aspect of a Madagascar ape, who informed the skipper that a

Spaniard had, three days before, sailed with a cargo of five hundred slaves, and that the next lot was not likely to be down sooner than ten days or a fortnight. I was never in that river, nor have I much acquaintance with the West African coast, but I can guess its character where it lies steaming under the equinoctial heights, besides gathering a bright fancy of it, at least of the River Bonny, from my father's descriptions.

"A detention of call it a fortnight was almost like a death-warrant. My father would speak of the stream of the broad river flowing thick, sickly, of the hue of chocolate to the ocean beyond. The heat was roasting in the daytime, and the dazzle of the central fire, striking full upon the river, made a very flame of it with brilliance and with the scorching of the light that floated off it, till the motionless atmosphere tingled with the lustre, and the eye reeled with the slow and giddy twisting of objects winding like serpents in the suffocating haze. The black mud came in a filthy ooze to the wash of the water, with mangrove bushes and dwarfed palms and jungles of wild cane behind, and past them was the twilight of the forest, with here and there a spike of sunlight like a spear of fire showing motionless in the shadow, where it would fling out into startling relief the gnarled and twisted trunks of the giant trees, outlines which would keep one staring for ten minutes at a time, so inimitable was their resemblance to the forms of huge serpents lifting fold upon fold of black and bloated skin from the rounded sweep at their base to where their heads were hidden in the impenetrable roof of interlaced boughs on high. It was a sort of place, my father would say, to put startling fancies into the dullest man, specially if he should happen to be alone on deck with the night drawn down, the river

brimming with a faint light of its own 'twixt wreaths of miasmatic mist, hanging still or lazily stirring like the lingerings of the white smoke of cannon, with a moon riding high, perhaps, and showering down a light that rendered gauze-like the texture of the deadly vapour, through which objects ashore would loom in colossal proportions, whilst the silence, disturbed only by the seething of the muddy water, and by the wild, dim, inland concert of frogs and lizards, and toads and beetles, would be broken harshly and affrightingly by the sound of the sullen plunge as of something huge, such as a hippopotamus or an elephant wading, floundering-fashion, to cool its vast shape.

"This waiting was the weariest and most sickly thing in the world, spite of the schooner lying close against the dense vegetation of the point which concealed her topmasts from any eyes that might be mast-headed even two hundred feet high in the blue offing past the bar. All day long it was the ceaseless squawk of the paroquet, the chatter of the monkey, the locust-like humming of insects like golden bodkins darting on wings of gossamer; now and then a malignant roaring far off, with the Guinea grass and spikes as of aloes stirring to the movement of hidden things which the imagination made diabolical out of the mere hint of the great red toadstools and the ominous waving of the undergrowth which caused the sailors to thank God they could see where they trod on board ship.

"In fact, no man talked of going ashore. A party would start away in a boat, maybe, with muskets and ball, and row up some long creek which narrowed till the tufted heads of the trees combined into an exquisitely cool tunnel, whence they would return with a cargo of plantains, cocoa-nuts, and such wild fowl good for eating

as was to be had ; but as to going ashore, it was not only the fear of wild beasts that held the men to the schooner, there was no trust to be put in the savages round about. Why, of a night, whether it were clear or dark, six men always held the deck with small-arms ready to their hands, and the few guns the craft carried were loaded to the muzzles with grape, and trained to command the river up and down as well as the bank of the stream abreast ; and such precautions were needful enough, my father would say, for again and again, during the night they would catch a glimpse of the dusky shadow of canoes hovering in the distance, and twice when the mist was boiling all about them, and it was like peering into wool, they could hear the dip of paddles close aboard, and on each occasion when the dawn broke they found a score or more of spears sticking in the masts, the bulwarks, and other places, just as they had been silently launched out of the impenetrable thickness by ebony hands whose aim was for chance and the fetich to direct.

“ They had been lying five days, when Jim Sawyer, who managed to keep himself under the influence of liquor—whence it was plain he had the art of obtaining more than his share, liberal as the dose to all hands was—and who, ever since the schooner had been moored, had shown himself unusually blasphemous and quarrelsome and boastful to an uncommon degree even in him, took it into his head, as he informed his mates with many imprecations, that it was too hot to go on living without a bath, and that he had made up his mind to have a swim before the skin came off his body. It was a mad resolution ; for, though there was nothing to fear from the current round in the bight where the schooner lay, all hands knew that the river was full of

sharks—some of immense size—not to speak of other creatures quite as formidable, if not more so. But Jim, full of curses and half-drunk as well, swore that if the river was all sharks to where they lay, and alligators for the rest of the road up to its source, he'd have his swim. It was partly bounce and partly drink; but he meant what he said, and presently fell to stripping himself.

"The captain was below, sleeping off the fumes of a bowl which he was wont to empty shortly after breakfast; the mate was away in a boat along with five of the sailors. The men would have stopped Jim by force; but, hardened as they were, they yet had a sort of terror of his oaths, and, as my father would say, were unconsciously dominated by him; terrorised by his incredible impiety and swagger into pretty well allowing him to rule the forecastle. On the starboard side of the schooner the shore was easily within a pistol-shot; on the other side it might be about half a mile distant. It was to that side, of course, that the man proposed to swim. Having stripped, he dropped into the narrow forechains, and then, with a sneering, scornful look up at the men who overhung the rail, and a mocking cry charged with oaths that there wasn't a man aboard with a grain of his spunk in him, he put his hands together and dived.

"Now those who watched him disappear would have wagered every dollar they were likely to take up that he was gone for good, and they waited for some crimson patch or other that should let them know the spot where John Sharkee had nipped him. Instead, he rose a few fathoms away, coming blithely to the surface with a swing of his head, to clear the hair out of his eyes, and a shout to the men that it was the biggest treat he had ever had in his life. He swam steadily for some time,

his mates sending eager looks all round about him in search of any signs of sharks. But all on a sudden, though not before he was nearing the shore, one of the sailors yelled out, 'See there!' and pointed like a madman at what the others instantly perceived to be a huge crocodile making sail in direct pursuit of the fellow.

"What was to be done? The man's fate seemed assured. A seaman named Moss cried to my father, 'For God's sake, let's shoot him afore them jaws close upon him! It'll spare him a horrible death.'

"But neither my father nor the others would consent. They picked up the muskets which were always kept loaded, and sent a volley at the crocodile, but the bullets swept like hail upon steel off the scales of the armoured monster that was not to be deflected an inch by the explosion of the shot from its pursuit of the swimming man.

"The firing, however, had caused the fellow to look round, and he then saw what was in chase of him. He had plainly not been conscious of the pursuit of the terrible thing before, and now struck out with a fury that made the water foam about him. The sailors watched him without a stir, breathless with wild expectation and horror. The crocodile was within its own length of the man when his foot grounded, and he plunged forward, rising with the slope. The jaws of the creature were wide distended for the grip that seemed inevitable, when, all in a breath, a jungle of cane thickened with green growths immediately ahead of the man was seen to move, as though something writhed within, instantly followed by the flash of the body of some beast like a jaguar, or panther, or small tiger, that, springing with an incredible bound, swept clear of the sailor, at whom it had leapt, and plunged headlong into the widely sundered jaws of the crocodile!

"Believe me or not, as you will," exclaimed the narrator, addressing me earnestly, "my father never told this story without impressively swearing to the truth of it, and, incredible as it may sound, I believe, indeed, I know it to be as absolutely a fact as that he made one of the crew of that slaving vessel. The conflict was now between the crocodile and the beast; the mighty jaws had closed upon the brute's head, and its claws were powerless against the scales of the creature that began to drag it slowly into deep water. The lashing tail, the throes and convulsions of the long powerful body, the blood crimsoning the water for fathoms and fathoms, along with the silence of this amazing combat, made the scene terrible and impressive beyond language, and the wilder, perhaps, in the eyes of the men, for the spectacle of the sailor standing in his nakedness, with his arms hanging down in a posture of paralysis not even to be hinted at save by the brush of a painter. In a few minutes the crocodile had disappeared; nothing lingered but the convulsed hinder part of its prey, with the tail whipping the water into fury. This in a few moments vanished, and then the surface of the stream rolled smooth again, with the sunlight flashing up the broad dye of blood that overhung the spot where the creatures had disappeared.

"The men got a boat over and brought Jim Sawyer aboard. He never offered to speak; convulsion after convulsion chased him; the light had gone out of his eyes; he seemed deprived of the power of lifting his arms. They prised his set teeth open, poured a dram into his mouth, and got him into his hammock, where he lay for two days speechless. All hands supposed that his end had come; but he rallied and made shift to crawl up on deck, and presently recovered his health. But

he was a changed man. From that hour he was never known to put his lips to spirits; he was never heard to utter an oath. Indeed, my father told me that nothing but the captain's threats to set him ashore and leave him there induced him to lend a hand in the work of receiving the slaves. That was how Jim's reformation was worked. You may take my word for it that the story is as actual a fact as any piece of unquestioned truth in the world."

A HAIL FROM ALOFT.

A MAN once told me a strange story. Ashore the incident would pass as trifling, but the ocean accentuates everything, and a very small matter will become a memorable thing when there may be a thousand leagues of brine between it and the coast.

On the morning of a hot and sparkling day in the tropics, a full-rigged ship was quietly pushing through the blue water, fanned by a feverish gushing of radiant wind, that held the sails marble-like, and trembled an echo as of a distant tinkling of silver bells off the azure surface alongside. The men were at work on various jobs, some aloft, some stitching at a sail stretched along the deck; the clink of the spunyarn-winch ran a pleasant busy note through the quiet. In the cool violet shadow of the quarter-deck awning stumped the captain of the ship in a broad-brimmed straw hat and white clothes. The mate flitted here and there, one eye aloft, one eye along the decks. Right aft, past the twilight of the awning, the figure of the man at the wheel came out in a sort of glare to the burning showering of the sunlight, the picture looking the hotter and the more blinding for the flashing up of the bright brasswork upon the wheel and the dazzling stars in the metal hood of the binnacle.

On a sudden a scream rang through the quiet wind.

It was as shrill as a woman's, with a sound of anguish in it fit to make the heart sick. At the same moment you heard a dull plash alongside. Instantly there was a cry of "Man overboard!" with a rush of the men upon the deck to the bulwarks to look, and a wild shouting and pointing to the fellows up in the rigging. Swift as thought the captain hove a life-buoy, with a cry to the helmsman, followed by another for hands to lay aft to lower a boat.

It was a young ordinary seaman who had slipped and fallen, through a sudden giddiness, may be, caught from the swimming heat in which he was airily swinging when his grasp relaxed. They saw him rise with a shake of the head, to clear his eyes of the wet hair that blinded him, and then smile as he caught sight of the white circle floating within a few fathoms of him; but the two or three fellows who were aloft held their breath as they looked down with blanched faces and a dull, stupefied stare at the figure, for up there they were able to see what was hidden to those who were gazing over the rail—I mean the blue outline of a long shark following the ship at much such a distance as you would tow your patent log, but well down on the port quarter, whilst the man, who was making for the buoy, was to starboard, the ship slowly coming to the wind meanwhile, which might make one hope that the brute would be drawn off the scent of the poor fellow by the arching furrow of the keel. But they held a grim silence up there, dreading to paralyze the swimmer by calling the news of what they saw to the deck.

The seaman gained the lifebuoy, dexterously got it under his arms, and so floated, with a few flourishes of his hands to his mates to let them know that all was well with him. What with gripes to clear away, falls to

unstop, rudder to hang, and tackles to overhaul, boat-lowering at sea, in this scientific age, is a miserable, tedious business ; with no better foresight, maybe, than a thumb for a plug and patent clip hooks to bring the boat up and down, like a yard of pump-water, in a sea-way. Scarcely had four men shoved off, in charge of the mate, when there was a wild cry aloft, re-echoed from the sea by such another ear-piercing scream as had first given the alarm. The man floating in the buoy flung his arms straight up, stiff as marlinspikes, and then they drooped, coming slowly to his side like the handle of a pump sinking from its horizontal position, whilst his head gradually sank upon his breast.

"He's been bitten in half!" roared a voice from aloft.

One did not need to see a fin of the beast that had done this to gather, by the posture of the man, that it had happened. In a few moments the boat was alongside him, and he was lifted out of the buoy dead, all below the line of the buoy nipped off clean as though a saw had gone to work there.

They brought the trunk to the ship, stitched it up, and buried it. It was a horrible thing to happen. It was the more frightful, too, for its suddenness. A desperate gloom fell upon the spirits of the crew. They spoke in whispers, went for their meals on tiptoe, and when the dog-watch came they hung about forward in thoughtful, melancholy groups ; for, though the sailor claims that there is no sentiment at sea, death is as bitter a depressent on the ocean as it is amongst us on shore, and such an end as this man had met will haunt the mind of those who witness it for days and weeks. You saw the influence of the horror of the thing aft, too, in the subdued air of the skipper and the milder manner

of the mates in whatever they had to deliver to the men.

An hour before sundown, the breeze holding and the ship wrinkling through it at some three to four miles in the hour, there had risen some homeward-bound sail off on the starboard bow, a big ship apparently that had soared to the yawn of her braced-up courses when the evening shadow went flickering to her canvas with a rusty red of sunset lingering a little upon the heights of her three white spires.

The moon rose at eight or thereabouts, lifting with a wet ice-like sparkle out of the eastern line of indigo which ran her glory in a sinuous stream to midway betwixt the ship and the horizon, and filled the atmosphere with a cloudy splendour of light in which the distant vessel showed in the south-west dusk like the shoulder of a body of vapour hanging motionless. It was a soft and lovely night indeed; the heavens going from the sphere of the white flooding of the moon down to the sea-line very rich with large trembling stars, and the night wind with a scent in it as sweet as new milk. The first mate had charge of the deck from eight to midnight. It was so burning hot below that the second mate came up at six bells with a groan to his brother-officer that he had only been able to catch a half-hour's nap, and then his dream was all about the man who had gone overboard, with the look of the body as it lay in the boat when it came alongside. He wiped the sweat from his brow, and said that, for his part, if there was such a thing as a waterproof hammock aboard, he'd be glad to fill it to the rim and lay in soak till it was time to get up.

The captain was below, and the two mates paced the deck together for awhile. They were talking quietly

over the incident of the day, when suddenly a voice up amongst the shadows of the sails and rigging cried out, in a melancholy, rusty sort of tone—

"Here's poor Jack, come back again! Here's poor Jack, come back again!"

Now it was nearly as clear as daylight forward of the sails where the roundings of their bosoms were, but the hollows abaft rose in several shades of dusk, with silver archings of moonlight under the curved foot of the canvas. The mates came to a halt with their hearts sounding loud in their ears. It was not only that the man who had fallen overboard bore the name of Jack; this cry, sounding out of the airy gloom aloft, was in dismal and distracting correspondence with the mates' thoughts and words.

"Did you hear it?" cried one of them to the other.

"Here's poor Jack, come back again!" sounded afresh from somewhere up out of the main topmast-crosstrees.

"By the holy eleven thousand!" cried the second mate. "What—what—but it must be some thundering skylarking son of a gun up there. Yet, d'ye make out anything, sir? It's all a'blank to my eye."

The awning had been for hours rolled up, and the canvas went in a tower to the stars clear as ebony and silver to the gaze.

"Some one's singing out aloft," cried a voice forward.

"Poor Jack, he's come back! Poor Jack, he's come back!" came the rusty cry, but clear as a bell floating downwards out of the gloom with not a hint of a human figure anywhere up there to be seen.

"Aloft there!" bawled the mate; "lay down smartly, whoever you are, d'ye hear? or it'll be a joke to boil in your guts when I make ye swallow it afresh."

"*Jack's come back! Jack's come back!*" was the answer, followed by a low, melancholy wailing, "*Ha, ha, ha!*"

The watch on deck forward were all astir, gazing up; the two mates stared their hardest; but there was nothing to be seen. The captain arrived.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "What's the hailing about?"

"*Jack's come back!*" sounded the strange cry afresh, but with a languishing note in it, as though uttered by a very feeble and dejected throat.

"Some fellow skylarking up there," cried the captain, after a start and a flourish of his hands and a long breath; "d'ye see anything?"

"No, sir."

"Confoundedly queer!" he ejaculated, peering and peering.

Gloomy as was this side of the canvas, the sheen in the atmosphere was brilliant enough to tincture it, and no man up there could have shown so much as his head, or even an arm, without certainty of detection from the deck.

"What is it?" said the captain; "there is nothing in timber and sailcloth to talk, you know, and as to ghosts——" he looked blankly at the mate, and then exclaimed, "Send a couple of hands aloft to see what they can make of it."

But the deuce a man would stir.

"Jump now, lads, two of ye," cried the mate, but the only response he got was a sulky growl and an uneasy shifting of the figures, who had come together in a huddle, and were looking up. "Here," he exclaimed to the second mate, "you take the lee shrouds; I'll go to windward. Between us we ought to be able to solve this business."

The second mate hung in the wind a minute, looking idly on, but observing the other spring into the weather rigging, he made for the port shrouds, and so they went sprawling aloft, but very gingerly, with a halt of the chief mate and a prolonged stare up to a further cry of, "*It's Jack come back! It's Jack come back!*"

"See anything on your side?" he called to the second mate, as they arrived together at the futtock shrouds.

"Nothing," was the answer.

"Well, ghost or no ghost, here goes," exclaimed the mate, and, catching hold of the topmast rigging, he put his knee on the edge of the top and sprang into it.

An instant after, he bawled, "Murder! murder! Thunder and slugs! Though it's a — it's a —."

The rest was drowned in several strange shrieks.

"Lord, he's bitten me!"

"What is it?" roared the skipper, in an agony of curiosity and alarm, from the quarter-deck.

"A blooming parrot, sir," answered the mate, "if it isn't a vulture."

And so it was. The two men smothered the bird in a handkerchief, and brought him below. The poor creature proved to be a fine specimen of the African grey parrot. It seemed half dead with exhaustion, but its fright on being exposed to the cabin lamp was so great that it spread its wings in a feeble effort to fly, by which it was seen that its ample breadth and length of pinions were unshorn. It put its head on one side and, fixing its lack-lustre eye on the mate, it exclaimed, "*Poor Jack's come back!*" and then fell on its side, and, though all possible care was taken of the handsome creature, it was found dead next morning. The theory was that it had escaped from the ship that had been sighted that

afternoon, and that it had arrived at the rigging at dusk unperceived by any one on board, and that, the moonlight being as sunrise and the figures of the men on deck very plain, it had sounded, perhaps, the only syllables it had been taught, urged by some parrot-like instinct to call attention to its presence. There were not wanting some grim and superstitious salts aboard the ship to hint that though, to be sure, it was an African grey parrot, there was more went to the making of it than a beak and talons and feathers; and perhaps the captain and mates showed themselves by no means insensible to the rough superstitious forecastle fancy, by ordering the sailmaker to stitch the parrot up in a canvas bag with a lump of holystone at his toes for such another burial as they had given their truncated shipmate the day before.

OLD JUPITER.

I stood on a quayside one day watching with considerable amusement the antics of a gaunt, ragged, one-eyed dog on the deck of a ship moored against the wall. It was tolerably evident that this dog had just completed a long voyage, and was hungering for the society of other dogs. The ship was a large sailing vessel of considerable length, and whenever the dog caught sight of another dog on the quay up above, that was hopelessly inaccessible to the lonely and yearning creature, it would set up a number of most harsh melancholy barks, a sort of rusty, tearful invitation to come aboard and keep him company; and, yelping all the while at the other dog, he would travel the length of the ship as the one above moved along the quay until he could get no further, when, planting himself in a most distressful posture, with a tear in his one eye and a stumpy erection of his jagged and ragged tail, he continued to watch the dog until it was out of sight, meanwhile rending the air with his unheeded barking, until, the other having disappeared, he would throw up his nose as though catching a fly, with a howl of baffled temper, and then sullenly and silently trot back to the taffrail, there to lie in wait for the next dog that should come along.

A man near me was watching the animal. I could not refrain from laughing out when the creature came

away from the forecastle with an unusually loud howl of disgust and despair, after having travelled the length of the ship for the fourth time since I had been observing him, and turning to the man who was also looking, I exclaimed—

“That dog evidently feels lonely.”

“Ay,” said he, “his ugliness is against him. He doesn’t seem able to make friends. On his side he is willing enough, but his one eye and general broken appearance prove too much for other dogs. I’ve seen them watch him as though fascinated, and then break away with a howl.”

“You evidently know the dog, sir,” said I.

“He is mine,” he answered. “I have had him since I was chief mate, and he’s been three voyages with me in that craft,” nodding toward the vessel in such a way as to make me gather he was her commander.

“He should possess some virtue,” said I, “which has nothing whatever to do with beauty to recommend him to you. He certainly is a very ugly dog. A more shipwrecked aspect it would be impossible to imagine in a four-footed beast. It seems true, as you say, that his appearance fascinates other dogs, for, look at that,” I added, pointing to a small squab bull-terrier that had come to a rest on its hams to have a look at the creature below that was barking imploringly at him with a languishing lift of his streaming one eye.

The bull-terrier had a most pugilistic countenance, the malignant character of which, however, was now neutralized by a peculiar interrogative and partially dismayed cock of the ears. His head fell on one side, as, with evidently growing amazement, he surveyed the gaunt scarecrow that barked at him; then, slowly rising on his hinder legs until he stood on all fours in a

posture of recoil, his tail shooting out like a marline-spike and his heavy, black, square chops dribbling with excitement, in a breath he took to his heels and ran along the quay, followed by the animal on deck, that made several efforts to jump on to the off-rail to obtain a view of the departing beast, finally coming to a halt at the foot of the bowsprit, where he delivered his howl of disappointment, and then returned.

"I never before knew that dogs were to be affected by appearances in one another," said I. "The big and the little amongst them mingle, without any regard, that I could ever see, to personal attractions."

"It's the same all the world over with that fellow," he answered. "It matters not into what port we put, the dogs belonging to the place decline to have anything to do with him. Yet, taking him all round, I doubt whether there's his match on earth for sagacity and affection and attachment. Of course, dog nature is dog nature. He is excited now by the sight of other dogs, and would be glad to step ashore, I dare say, and enjoy a friendly chat, if he could meet with another dog willing to listen to his adventures; but at sea he shows himself often more sensible than a man. I've known him to keep a look-out on the fore-castle in narrow waters, and to sing out with his queer bark when anything hove into sight. If he had hands I'd rather trust him at the wheel than some men who ship as able seamen in these days.

"Have you had him long?" I asked.

"Six years," he answered.

"There should be a queer story attached to such an amazing anatomy as that," said I, with a further glance at the wolf-like creature, with its long legs and yard of red tongue flickering from the yawn of its pointed snout

with the emotions of disappointment which filled the animal.

My companion looked at his watch, took a gaze to right and left, as though he waited for some one with whom he had made an appointment, and then, with an askant peep at me, as if to make sure of his comrade of the moment, he exclaimed, in an off-hand sailorly way—

“ Since you’re interested in old Jupiter, sir, I’ll give you his yarn with pleasure. It was six years ago. I was then chief mate of a large barque called the *Diamond City*, bound from a Scotch port to the western American coast. Nothing unusual had happened for weeks. One morning we were a few degrees south of the Equator. For days we had been bothered with light head airs, and it was something to make one draw one’s breath as though a miracle had happened to find the Line over the stern in weather that had been little more than calm after calm, with faint breathings of wind always on either bow, which died out of the glassy sea even as you watched them like the steam of your breath off a mirror. I came on deck at four o’clock in the morning; at daybreak the hands were set to wash down as usual, when one of the fellows who were rigging the head pump sung out that there was a small black object dipping on the horizon just over the port cathead. I took the ship’s glass, and on levelling it made out the thing to be a boat, or if not that then a baulk of timber that looked like a boat. The most insignificant object upon the breast of the broad waters, after you have been afloat for weeks without an interest of any sort to put a stir into you, will take a strange importance. The ship was scarcely moving; so quicksilver-like was the surface over the side that if you looked over you saw your face glimmering up at you like that of a body

floating fathoms deep, with the wavering stare of the white bottom of the quarter-boat, as though there had been a capsizal down there, and she were slowly settling keel up, and you were going down along with her. Yet in some fashion we sneaked along, and by eight bells had the distant object well abaft the cathead; and now, with the aid of the glass, I was able to see that she was a boat, with a thin streak of mast going up out of her like a hair, the hull a dark blue, and no hint of life in her.

"The captain came on deck and took a view of her, but said nothing. I was eating my breakfast in the cabin when the steward, coming in, said that one of the sailors, who had been above on some job in the foretop, had hailed the deck to say that he could hear what sounded to him like the faint barking of a dog coming from the direction of the boat.

"That'll be odd," said the captain, 'if it's true. May as well head for her if there's air enough;' with which we went on deck.

"The silence upon the sea was deep as a breathless calm can make it. The captain and I went to the rail and bent our ears in the direction of the boat; the men, observing us do this, held their peace, and for a little knocked off all work that would make a noise, and sure enough, after we had stood listening for a few moments, both of us heard a faint yap-yapping. The boat was a good distance off, but you know how sound will travel over polished water. Scan her, however, as we might, there was nothing to be seen but the little fabric itself, restfully swaying on the folds that floated long drawn out of the hot blue stagnant distance.

"The helm was shifted; but the ship had scarce steerage way upon her, and as nothing could come of

manœuvring on the chance of there being a stir of air somewhere high aloft, the captain, in a sort of dubious way, as though it would be all the same to him whether I fell in with his scheme or not, suggested, rather than directed, that I should go in one of the boats and see what sort of dog it was that barked unseen in the little craft. So I called some of the men aft, the port quarter-boat was lowered, and away we went, the sea being like an Irish lake on a summer afternoon, and the ship looking, at a little distance, like an exquisite model of a barque with all canvas set, fixed in glass, and rhythmically swayed by a kind of cunning that was as good as nature.

"As we neared the boat I, who was steering, caught sight of a ragged-looking head, with drooping ears and one gleaming eye, faltering over the line of gunwale, and coming and going there as though it staggered, with an occasional bark that was no better than a howl of pain in its way, as though the beast was being tortured. We drove alongside, and I stood up to have a look, and scarcely noticed the dog for a moment in the excitement and horror raised in me by the sight of a dead man lying in the bottom of the boat. A wilder figure I never saw. He wore a kind of blue velvet pantaloons, the ends stuffed into half Wellingtons, a red sash round his waist, a striped shirt, and a hat like a Tam-o'-Shanter. He was a fierce-looking fellow, with a heavy black moustache, 'twixt which and his fallen jaw glittered a range of white teeth. A gold cross attached to a ribbon around his neck lay by his side. His hand was against his heart, and you needed to peer a minute to see that it gripped the half of a poniard or some such weapon, the blade of which lay buried in his breast. The dog—the same chap that you see there, sir," said the captain,

pointing to the deck of his ship, "uttering a hoarse whine, lay down, his fore-legs upon the body, and the foam of a maddening thirst draining from his dark, protruding tongue. We took the boat in tow, and returned to the ship, but though the dog was half dead with thirst, hunger, and exhaustion—who can tell how many days that boat had been afloat?—he started up with a venomous growl, as though he would tear us to pieces, when we laid hold of the body to hand it over the side; and, dying as the poor beast was, he must have held us all at bay, but for some one chucking a piece of canvas down to us, in which we smothered him, and passed him up. They gave him water and food, and he lay very quietly on the hatch, with his one poor eye shut, as though in a doze.

"There was nothing in the boat nor on the person of the man to enable us to put names and dates to the story of this little ocean tragedy. The captain ordered the cross to be taken off the body in the hope of the relic throwing a light upon the dark tale by-and-by, but he turned with a look of loathing from the suggestion that the knife or poniard should be withdrawn, and so the wild-looking creature was hurriedly stitched up as he lay, his hand clutching the death in his heart, and his face, with a twisted sneer of anguish and defiance upon it, staring blindly at the brassy sky. The captain said that the cross, let alone the figure and looks of him, proved him a Roman Catholic, and that, if he could know, he would not thank us for a Protestant burial; so the order was given to bring him quietly to the gangway and give him the last launch in silence.

"But an instant before the stitched-up body slid overboard, the dog, that had all this time been lying apparently dozing upon the main hatch, sprang to his

legs with a savage growl, and, the bulwarks being too high for him to jump, he sped like wildfire up the poop ladder and darted overboard through the open rail, within a couple or three seconds after the corpse had clove the water. Now, all that morning, ever since sunrise, when I was first able to catch a view of the beast, there had been a shark of some ten to twelve foot long hanging about the ship. I guessed he would still be in the neighbourhood, and that even if he were a league distant, the combined splash of the body and the dog would summon him to the vessel. There was a hideousness about the poor gaunt brute that had caused me to fall in love with him; besides, a shark's bowels were no fit tomb for a creature of more than human loyalty that had suffered horribly as well.

"The boat we had fallen in with lay alongside. I ordered a couple of men to tumble into her, and, picking up a long harpoon that rested against a foremost hen-coop—for all through the tropics one or another of us had been trying his hand at John Sharkee in this way whenever he hauled in close enough to give us the chance—I sprang on to the rail; and just in time. The dog was swimming round and round over the spot where the body had vanished, whining and growling as he revolved; and within twenty feet of him, so close to the surface that the tip of his black back-fin forked up leaning like an empty bottle, was the shark of the morning, posturing for that revolutionary manœuvre which threatened the disappearance of the dog in a very few breaths. I poised the harpoon and darted it with my full strength; it flew true as an arrow to the dark bluish length, and lodged as firm as a stake driven deep in earth. I whipped off the rail with a cry to the men in the boat to pick up the dog, and as swiftly as I am

talking, took a turn with the harpoon line round a pin ; but, deep as the weapon had penetrated, it was not deep enough to detain the powerful fish. With a sweep of the tail it drove forward in foam, tearing itself sheer off the barbed point, and made for the depths, leaving behind it a wake of blood that rose in crimson bubbles to the surface. But I had effected my end, and had saved the dog. There he is, sir, as loving and intelligent a brute as ever wagged a tail. His ugliness keeps him lonesome, as you see ; he can't meet with a friend the wide world over ; but I reckon he finds his account in philosophy. The moment he's out of sight of other dogs he grows wonderfully thoughtful ; reasons, I dare say, that it's all for the best his face is against him, as he might otherwise fall into low company."

The captain raised his hat with a smile ; I bowed, and, after another look at poor, lonely, ragged old Jupiter, who was staring eagerly, in his one-eyed way, up at the quay wall in search of another dog, I walked off.

A STRANGE BELLMAN.

RECENTLY, in the smoking-room of a hotel standing close to the dock gates of a seaport, the name of which need not be given, I was much interested by the conversation of a couple of persons, the only occupants of the small, low-pitched, sanded-floored, and beery-smelling apartment besides myself. One was a nautical man, an exceedingly well-spoken gentleman, with little more than a weather-coloured skin to distinguish him as a seafarer. The other had something of the air of a commercial traveller, a tall lean man, buttoned to the throat in black cloth, with bulging coat tails, as though his bag was not the only receptacle of the samples he hawked about.

"I was never very partial to the ocean," said this gentleman. "Couldn't read a nautical book if you was to pay me. Can't see any fun in yachting either, and think, seeing that men and women were born to live upon dry land, that there must be something unnatural in natures which prefer water to airth; same as it would be unnatural in a boy that loved acorns before roast beef. But had it been my lot to go to sea, I should have chosen to follow the life fifty years ago, when there was plenty of excitement, and a deal for a man to see and to talk about when he came home."

"What more excitement then than now?" said the nautical man quietly.

"Lord love 'ee," cried the other, "everything happened then. Happened for good and all. Don't occur any longer. Take up the newspapers; all you get about the sea is collisions."

"Think so?" said the other.

"Sure," replied the commercial traveller.

"There's a deal of talk," exclaimed the nautical man, with a half-glance at me, whilst he leisurely loaded the bowl of his pipe, "about the romantic and the picturesque days of the seafaring life which are commonly set down as ending much about the period of the introduction of iron and steam. But so far as excitement goes, I confess, when I look back, I find—outside war times, I mean—nothing more striking in the way of curious circumstances than are occurring to-day. Read the records of the old shipwrecks; they are all of a piece, one as much like another as the shrouds which support a mast. There is no legend of open-boat sufferings that tops the like yarns of the present age. And what are the old adventures as compared to men's experiences since the introduction of steam? As to romance and picturesqueness, see here, sir. Will you tell me that there was anything ever launched by the old shipwrights in the golden age of the marine, according to the romance writers, to compare in beauty, elegance, perfection of finish, with scores of iron ships and barques which you may meet every day on the ocean, sheering through it with keels as engaging to the eyes as the sweetest timber-built clipper that was ever launched? Romance! Go to the past and match me, if you can, the spectacle of an ocean liner of five thousand tons thundering through the sea on a dark still night, her fabric like a body of fire, the pitchy coil of her smoke suddenly crimsoning for many fathoms from the mouth

of her funnel to the leap and roar of red flames deep down, with foam to the hawse-pipes through the head-long thrust of the vast and shapely mass of metal, and a wake pouring out from under her counter upon the black and breathless calm, wilder than was ever churned by the passage of a four-decker rushing under reefed topsails before a gale of wind ! ”

“ Ah ! but,” said the other, “ where are your pirates, your hidden treasures, your slavers with the tremendous excitement of chasing of ’em ? Remember the old song—

‘ Set every inch of canvas, boys,
To woo the freshening wind !
Our bowsprit points to Cuba ;
The coast lies far behind ? ’

That’s the sort of romance that’s past, captain. No use talking. Nothing happens at sea nowadays. Look at your sea songs. All rot, sir. There’s been nothing written for thirty years in the nautical line that’ll bear talking about. It’s all gone. Not that I care. Never was partial to the ocean myself, as I’ve said ; but nothing happens now.”

“ Nothing happens, eh ? ” cried the nautical man. “ All the pirates gone, are they ? No hidden treasures to be searched after ; no slaving, is it ? Go and ask them at the Admiralty. What d’ye say to the skipper of a ship falling in with a boat containing six men half dead with thirst and famine ? He brings them aboard and asks them for their story, whereupon they fall to whispering one to another, nudging with their elbows, inventing amongst them a lie, which they recite. Presently the captain catches sight of the band of a handcuff on the wrist of one of the men. He don’t like it, sir ; they’re an ugly, grimy, scowling group, one of ’em

English, the rest foreigners, one man's face like a rotten lemon, with murder lying red, sir, in the gleam of every eye. He don't like it, I say; so he orders their boat to be got alongside, furnishes her with a mast and sail, food, and whatever else might be necessary, and tells these men to enter her and be off. Bad as marooning them almost, seeing that their nearest point was an uninhabited island. But he couldn't help that. They growled like beaten savage dogs, as one by one they dropped into the boat, gazing askant at the pistols which the captain had deemed it necessary to send for and arm himself with. You say there are no pirates left? The black flag ceases to fly, I allow; but there are plenty of pirates flourishing yet. Don't doubt it."

"Oh, I dare say——" began the commercial traveller.

"Or you're in want of incident," broke in the other. "You go to your newspapers for reports of the ocean life, and, because you find little or nothing, you conclude that everything happened fifty years ago. My good sir, don't think of editors if you want news of the sea; get you gone to the sailors' lodging-house, spend a few weeks at a sailors' home, ship as a foremast hand in the first English forecandle that will receive you. It is there, and only there, you will get to know what is going on upon that broad breast to which you confess yourself not very partial. I'll tell you what the captain of a small barque—a friend of mine—told me only yesterday. They sighted a big buoy that had gone adrift clear of the chops a long way out. Likely as not the thing was being towed, when the rope parted, and it was lost. There is never any need to go into reasons for what happens at sea. The fact is before you, and that must suffice. There was a very light air blowing—

about enough to keep the vessel under command. The buoy hove in sight a point on the bow, and the barque was headed to pass it within biscuit toss. As they approached they saw that it had been stove, or holed. There was a gap of the size of a manhole about as high as the length of a man's arm above the water-line. My friend was leaning over the rail looking at the thing when he distinctly heard a dull cry proceed from it. He could scarcely credit his ears, but the mate and the fellow at the wheel had both heard it too.

“‘There is some one hailing us inside that buoy, sir,’ cried the mate.

“‘Sounded very much like it,’ answered the captain, and instantly ordered the vessel to be brought-to.

“A boat was lowered, in charge of the mate, and pulled to the buoy. They got alongside, and the mate, putting his face in the hole, sung out—

“‘Anybody in here?’

“‘Ay, ay,’ answered a hollow voice; ‘for God’s sake help me out of it before I am drowned.’

“It was pitch-black inside, and they could see nothing, so they returned to the barque for a line, and, making a bowline, lowered it into the buoy, bidding the fellow within to look out for it.

“‘Hoist away,’ he presently cried.

“The sailors tailed on, and up came the man into the hole, glimmering and blinking out of the blackness like a drowned rat. They dragged him into the boat and got him aboard, and, after swallowing a glass of rum and a mouthful of victuals, he was able to talk. He said that he was a sailor aboard a small schooner bound for the Mediterranean. He fell overboard on the night before the barque met with him. A lifebuoy was hove close, and he managed to get hold of it; but the boat

that was sent in search missed him and gave up, and the schooner proceeded. At dawn he spied a great buoy floating a hundred fathoms distant. He made for it, and as there was no hold to be got outside, he climbed into the hole, intending to lie half over it, like a chap looking out of a window; but the position was more than he could support, his strength failed him, and he slipped to the bottom. There was about a foot of water in it then, but every now and again a slop of ripple would fling down a hookpotful, as an earnest of what was to happen if there should come on a breeze of wind. What say you to that, sir, for an adventure, considering that these are iron times, you know?"

"I believe you, of course, you know," answered the commercial traveller; "but I don't think it's a story your friend the captain's sailors would believe, whatever the marines might think of it."

"Yet you'd consider it a mighty fine incident were you to read of it in a narrative fifty years old," answered the nautical man.

His eye twinkled as he turned it comically my way, whilst he exclaimed, "Come, I'll spin you a brief yarn of my own knowledge, an experience I can vouch for on the cocksure testimony of my sight and my ears. It was in 1879. I was master of a ship called the *Mary Lamb*, bound to Pernambuco with a general cargo. We had met with little more than light baffling airs during the run—scarce a taste of the North-East Trades—an experience that had never before happened to me, though, oddly enough, before I sailed, a friend of mine that I met down at the Docks—our conversation happening upon the weather of the Atlantic—told me that in his passage to the West Indies in the preceding year he fell in with no hint of the Trades, but was blown by

a light nor'-wester half-way into the tropics, where he lay humbugging with his yards for a fortnight, barely traversing twenty miles a day sometimes. Well, it came to our finding ourselves at last, after an intolerably tedious passage, in something a little north of twelve degrees, a dead calm, the air sitting like a blister upon the skin, the flying jibboom revolving like a twisted corkscrew off the bow into the roasting light blue of the atmosphere, and our mastheads making into the giddy dazzle over the trucks as though each spar were a serpent trying to wind itself into the sky."

"Oh, come, come!" cried the commercial traveller. "Hang it all, you know—corkscrews and serpents! It must be middling hot down there, sir."

"A fact, I assure you," said the nautical man with much good-temper. "You will forgive my similes. But to proceed. It came on a very dark night. Possibly, sir, you are acquainted with the equinoctical parallels?"

"Sir," answered the other, "sorry to say that I was never further south than Cally."

"Well, sir," continued the nautical man, confining the expression of his mirth to his eyes, "in the tropics, when the sun sets, darkness follows rapidly, and it has sometimes seemed to me as though a black night in the neighbourhood of the equator grows the blacker to the fancy, at all events, for the want of the familiar twilight. It is like stepping from a brilliantly lighted hall into a vault-dark bedroom—you want a candle to graduate your sight to the change. A black night it was that came on, breathless too, the water like oil and as soundless; just a mere smear of rusty moon, low and thickening out of sight in the west, with here and there a tarnished blur of star. There had been nothing in

sight at sunset, the sea ran clear as the lens of a glass the whole way round. I had gone below at half-past nine to procure a cheroot and to cool myself with a glass of cold brandy grog; and when I returned on deck I noticed by the haze of the cabin light upon the skylight the figure of the mate leaning against the rail in a listening posture.

“ ‘What do you see?’ said I.

“ ‘There’s a bell tolling out abeam of us, sir,’ said he.

“ ‘Any signs of a light?’ said I, peering and supposing it was a ship’s bell that he had heard.

“He answered, ‘No.’

“I listened, and in a moment caught very distinctly the sound of the tolling of a bell. I called to the steward for my binocular glass, and swept the water with it in the direction of the noise; but all was black as thunder there, as elsewhere around us. The bell continued to toll at fitful intervals, but with its sound increasing in a manner to show that, whatever might be the cause of it, it was coming our way. I strained my ear for any sort of throbbing or seething to indicate the nearness of a steamer, for it was impossible that anything that travelled by sail power only could stir by a hand’s breadth on so dead a night as that. But all was still saving the sound of the bell.”

“Doooid odd!” exclaimed the commercial traveller.

“Inch by inch, as it seemed to me,” continued the nautical man, “the mysterious clanging grew upon us. At times I’d think it was up in the air. I confess it scared me. The mate was so awed he could only speak in whispers. The man at the wheel asked to be relieved, and was so honestly terrified that I allowed another hand to replace him. The hard part of it was there was nothing to be seen. Stealthily but steadfastly the

strange noise came along, and presently the bell was ringing out upon the quarter, within musket-shot, to judge by the sound, and then it drew dead astern, and passed on to t'other quarter, where it fell faint. But the thing apparently became stationary after a bit, for the tolling was continued, though at lengthening intervals, regularly striking the ear with the same strength, and it was still ringing when I went below at two bells in the middle watch—that is to say, at one o'clock—filled with amazement, sickened and stupid with puzzling over what it could mean, and hardly less nervous than if the apparition of the Evil One had been sighted looming close aboard of us.

“The mate came to my cabin at sunrise. 'Twas still a clock calm, the sea flat and polished as a mirror. He told me there was a strange sight to be seen off the quarter—a sort of miniature gibbet floating on a small raft of planks, with a bell suspended to it, and the whole concern apparently harnessed to a fish—a great shark, some of the sailors swore, though he couldn't be sure of that. I went on deck, and saw what the mate had described, about three-quarters of a mile distant down upon the port beam. Whatever had been towing it was at rest, and though there was a shallow undulation in the water it was so gentle and long between that the bell did not ring to it. I at once sent the mate away in a boat to report. He was a long while eyeing the thing, rowing round it, and the like, and then when he came back he told me that sure enough it was a small gallows set up on a bit of a raft, with an old, small, green ship's bell slung amidships of it. The fabric was secured to an immense shark, eighteen feet long at the very least, that had been spritsail-yarded—that is to say, a small spar had been thrust through its jaws abaft its teeth

clear of its bite, and secured to a grummet of rope fixed to the fish astern of its dorsal fin. It was, of course, a sailors' joke. Some ship out of sight of us had hooked the monster, and the Jacks had sent it adrift thus equipped. What think you of that for a yarn, sir?"

The commercial traveller seemed to be rehearsing a speech whilst he filled another pipe, but either words or imagination failed him, for he said nothing. But it was time for me to be off, so, giving the nautical man a smile as I passed, I left the room.

LAMED ON THE GOODWINS.

A very singular experience was lately related to me by a gentleman whose love of boating and rowing has proved on more than one occasion, as he told me, rather too strong for his discretion. I will leave him to tell the story in his own words.

"I was stopping at Broadstairs at the time," he began. "The Goodwin Sands, as of course you know, lie almost abreast of this fresh and briny little town. There had been a wreck standing on those sands for some time. The weather was fine, and the structure rested comfortably enough upon its soft brown bed, settling a bit at every flood, no doubt, but scarcely perceptibly. It was the wreck of a three-masted schooner, a vessel of about two hundred and thirty tons burthen, and all was bare aboard her saving the foremast, the stump of which, some ten or fifteen feet of it, showed like a mutilated limb lifted as an appeal for help and pity. I could see her very plainly through the telescope. I think she must have been ashore about eight days when I first took notice of her. Before that the hovellers had been busy, but now she was left to go to pieces as soon as she pleased. The 'longshore crows had picked the carcass clean of all flesh, and there lay the skeleton, black and dismal, putting an air of tragedy upon the face of those sands which there was no power in

satin-smooth waters and a blue atmosphere full of sunlight to neutralize.

"I rose one morning in the humour for a good long spin with a pair of sculls. I had made several excursions, one of them extending to Deal, which from Broadstairs would be a matter of seventeen or eighteen miles there and back. In rowing one wants an object—some place to go to, some point of interest, where one can get a rest—and not yet having made a trip to the Goodwins, I resolved this day to pull to the shoal, about eight miles distant, and have a look at the wreck that I had been ogling time after time, full of curiosity, through a telescope from a balcony of the house I lodged in.

"I went down amongst the boatmen and conferred with them as to when the sands would be dry, so that I might get ashore and walk round the wreck, or board her if I should have a fancy to do so. They told me that the shoal would be hard and fit to walk on at eleven o'clock. It was then about eight. I reckoned that the pull would occupy me something within two hours; but if it ran into three it would not signify, as I had the whole day before me, with a high barometer and a settled look in the clear, marble-like sky.

"The men wanted to know if I meant to go alone. I answered 'Certainly.' They said, if I proposed to land, who was going to look after the boat? I replied that I was not such a fool as not to know how to make the boat look after herself.

" 'I want to enjoy a quiet pull,' said I. 'For what purpose should I make the boat heavier than she is by clapping one of you fat fellows in the stern-sheets?'

"They answered that that was right enough; but in all long excursions it was always reckoned that two were better than one. There was a waterman, they said,

belonging to Ramsgate, who had gone away in his boat three days before and hadn't been heard of since. He started alone at daybreak, and when last seen was making in the direction of the Gull Lightship. Last night it was reported that his boat had been picked up floating empty somewhere off Dover. All was right with her, and there was no question, therefore, that the man had committed suicide. Now, if he had had another man along with him, even if he had jumped overboard suddenly and drowned himself, there would have been no mystery in the business. The widow and the little ones would have known how it had come about.

"I said that I had no idea of committing suicide, nor of even getting run down if I could help it, though such a disaster was not to be averted by taking another man with me.

"This discussion being ended, I returned to my lodgings, breakfasted, provided myself with a tin of meat, a loaf and butter, and a few bottles of ale. These things I carried to the harbour, put them aboard one of the lightest of the wherries that lay rippling at their moorings, threw my sculls over, and started. The tide headed me, but I made little of that, for the water was smooth and the air cool—the month, I must tell you, was September—and the sea clear of shipping; nothing to be seen but a rust-coloured tank or two, stretching to the southward past the sands, a French smack becalmed against the white cliffs, or a clumsy old tug ploughing in company with a barge off Ramsgate Harbour. However, though I maintained a steady stroke, it was noon before my stem sheared through the thin line of foam seething upon the margin of the gold-bright sands.

"High and dry immediately opposite was the wreck. I took the painter in my hand and jumped ashore; then,

catching hold of the bow of the boat, I easily ran her one-third the length of her keel up the bank, and, to provide yet further against the chance of her going adrift, I planted one of the sculls deep and securely in the firm soil of this dry shoal, and secured the end of the painter to it. Facing Broadstairs the Gull Lightship lay a long way on my left hand, looking a mere toy. At a considerable distance on my right floated another lightship, a three-masted vessel.

“I stood a little, surveying my boat, and narrowly considering the weather and the appearance of the sea; and, everything looking as promising as the most timid creature could desire, I took a bottle of beer from the boat, drank the contents, and then leisurely walked to the wreck to inspect her. She had settled down by several strakes, and sate with a slight list to port, which brought her chain-plates on that side easily within reach of my hand. The hull looked fairly sound, saving that some strips of metal sheathing hung from her, while lengths of her bulwarks were fractured, with several butts under the run started, probably through blows of the wreckage when it went over the side. After all, it was a novel experience, and I wanted to make the most of it. The sense of loneliness I got from those sands was inexpressibly deepened by the presence of the melancholy fabric—as dead a thing, you felt, in its way as a corpse—when you revived her with the fancy of her swelling canvas, human lives aboard, and the white washing of water alongside, as she swept when living through the frothing surge. I contemplated her, listening to the silence, to use a Paddyism, and letting the whole wild poetry of the picture sink into me. It was like being cast away, indeed, but something of a shudder went through me as I thought how it would be were I

cast away in reality, when my mind went to the slow creep of the water inch by inch, rising to a gleaming surface that would presently hide every fragment of this shoal and give to what was now firm to my feet the suck of a sponge.

"As the sands would remain dry for some hours, and as there was a tedious day before me to kill, I resolved to complete this experience of a trip to the Goodwins by boarding the wreck. I walked to her side that leaned towards me, and catching hold of a channel plate, hauled myself up hand over hand, till, with an easy vault, I stood on the vessel's deck. She had been picked to the cleanness of a bone. There was not so much as a ropeyarn to be seen along the whole length of her; her little caboose, that had been a sort of movable box secured to eyebolts, showed now in a few rags of splinters; the companion-hatch cover was smashed flat; wheel, binnacle, winch, capstan—whatever the sea or man's hand could remove had disappeared.

"I took a peep down the after-hatch, that lay like a yawn in the grimy deck, and had half a mind to descend, but was restrained by a scarcely accountable dislike of allowing my boat to be out of sight even for a couple of minutes. Then I went forward with the intention of examining the extraordinary figure the remains of the little galley made, when my foot caught in a ringbolt somewhere abreast of the foremast, and I fell heavily to the deck. With such violence, indeed, did my forehead, or rather the side of my head, strike the hard plank, that I think I must have lain for a little partially stunned.

"After a bit I endeavoured to rise, but found that I had sprained my ankle so terribly that I could not

touch the deck with it. The least pressure, or even exertion, rendered the agony unbearable. I cut the lace of my boot and bared my foot, and thought to ease the pain by chafing, but the agony was too acute to render the lightest touch of my fingers endurable. I endeavoured to reassure myself by thinking that the torment of the wrench would pass presently, that, miserable as the suffering was, it would not hinder me from rowing, if I could only gain the boat, and that by waiting a little I might make shift to fall over the side and crawl to her on my hands and feet. Meanwhile, the pain was like to drive me mad, and my physical sufferings were intensified by anxiety amounting to a feeling of despair almost, when, after keeping still for about a quarter of an hour, I thought to rise, and fell back half-swooning with the anguish of the effort. Great Heaven! thought I, wiping off the sweat-drops driven out of my brows by the torture in my ankle, how is this to end? The tide will be making presently, my boat will go adrift, and what then was to happen? I was without food or drink. If there should come on a breeze of wind, a sea might be set running sufficiently heavy to hammer the old bucket I was aboard of into staves before the morning. Consternation forced me into a furious effort. I cried to myself I must gain the boat, let my sufferings be what they will; and, getting on to my knees, I started to crawl towards the port bow, over against which the boat lay, but I had scarce succeeded in dragging myself as far as the little forecastle hatchway when my senses left me, and I rolled on my side in a dead faint.

"In this condition I may probably have lain half an hour. When I came to, I succeeded in sitting erect, and, not immediately feeling the pain in my ankle, I

thought to rise, but was instantly forced to desist by an agony that could not have been keener had my foot been severed by a knife. By this time the ankle had swelled hideously, with a strangled, black look, as of mortification, yet my sufferings, so long as I remained motionless, were much less acute. It was only when I attempted to rise that I discovered I could not be more helpless if I had lost a leg.

"Whilst I sat resting upon an elbow, endeavouring to console my mind by reflecting that there was no reason why the wreck should go to pieces, even if a sea did happen to rise, that the weather still looked fair and promising, that the Broadstairs boatmen knew what road I had taken, and that if they found I did not return by dusk a boatload of them would be pretty sure to make a hunt for me; I say, whilst I sat counting over my chances of deliverance, I was startled by a melancholy groan rising out of the little fore-hatch, near to which I had fainted. I could scarcely credit my senses. I imagined it might have been caused by some movement in the hull, but after listening a minute I heard it again, this time an unmistakable human groan. I was so startled and shocked that I forgot all about my helpless condition in the fright occasioned by this strange, unearthly noise. It was unimaginable that anything could be alive aboard this wreck. Here she had lain, to my certain knowledge, for over a week; all her crew had been saved; no hoveller had approached her for several days. What, then, could it be that was groaning like a wounded man in the dark fore-castle?

"The noise was repeated; this time a long-drawn, most heart-subduing, and, to a person circumstanced as I was, most hair-stirring moan. I extended my hands to the coaming of the scuttle, and writhing with the

torment of the movement, yet contrived to draw myself close enough to the aperture to look down into it. Judge of my astonishment when the first thing I beheld was the figure of a man lying on his back a little way forwards of the square of the hatch, and in the gloom there, where there was light enough to enable me to distinguish his outline.

"I called out, 'Who are you? How came you here? What is the matter with you?'

"He answered with another long groan, lifting his left arm, and letting it fall with a slap upon the deck in the most despairful manner that can be imagined.

"'Can't you speak?' I cried.

"'For God's sake, take me out of this, and help me home,' he answered feebly.

"'I wish to Heaven I could,' I exclaimed. 'I am as helpless as you—I cannot stir. What is the matter with you?'

"'I have broken my leg,' he replied.

"'How long have you been here?' I asked him.

"'I don't know,' he feebly responded; 'it seems a month, and now I am dying. For God's sake, lift me out of it, and help me home.'

"It flashed upon me on a sudden that this was the Ramsgate boatman about whose disappearance the Broadstairs men were telling me this morning.

"'Are you from Ramsgate?' I cried.

"'Yes,' he answered, groaning.

"'How did this plight befall you?'

"He answered in as weak a voice as ever dying man exerted, 'I came here to see if there was anything to be got, and fell down this hatch and broke my leg; and here have I been a-lying——.'

"He stopped, sobbing and groaning.

"It was now three days since he was missing, consequently he must have been in this dreadful situation all that time. It was quite likely that he was dying, as I have said, but how was I to help him? How was I to help myself, indeed? Despite my racking pains, I again made a writhing effort to stand, and again fell as utterly shorn of all power to stir as if my spine had been shot through. I thought to comfort the wretched creature below by assuring him that help was tolerably certain to reach us after dark from Broadstairs, when it was known that I had not returned, and when the telescopes of the boatmen gave them no signs of me upon the water, but all the reply I got was a succession of groans followed by a semi-delirious appeal for water.

"Well, there was nothing to be done. As the afternoon waned into evening my ankle grew worse—that is to say, the swelling increased, with more torment and weakness in it when I essayed to move, though so long as I left the limb to lie motionless on the deck, the pain was but a small throbbing. The man down in the dark forecastle continued to groan from time to time; but after five or six o'clock in the evening, as I might gather the hour from the westering of the sun, he uttered no further sounds, and, though I called to him several times, I obtained no response, whence I supposed he was dead.

"Long before sundown I was suffering miserably from thirst. When it came on dark, I remember stupidly gaping with a sort of agony to the stars, as though I should find a refreshment in the mere fancy of filling my mouth with dew. I could hear the rushing of the tide past the bends of the wreck, with a sharp snarling sound of seething, where the run of the waters foamed to the obstacle of the vessel's counter. There was a

bright moon, which comforted me. I would look down the hatchway from time to time, for a kind of comfort I found in beholding the figure of the man lying there, dim to spectralness as he was, and dead besides, as I imagined.

“Then, but at what hour I don’t know—the moon was not far from her meridian—I believe I fell asleep, exhausted by pain and a degree of mental anguish comparable to nothing I am sure my mind could support again outside a lunatic asylum, though I do not choose to make too much of it here. I was awakened by a sound of voices, and on opening my eyes beheld three men standing alongside of me. The moon was now in the west, but raining widely her white light, and it was almost as clear as at sunrise. It had happened as I anticipated. The Broadstairs men, finding that I did not return, concluded that in some manner I had lost my boat whilst upon the wreck, and putting their heads together, they resolved to seek me, the man to whom the boat belonged naturally proving very zealous in his desire to find out what had become of me. The night was breathless, the sea without a ripple. They were enabled to come alongside, and then they saw me lying asleep, with my head close against the hatch.

“I explained what had befallen me, and made them understand that I was helpless, besides being nearly dead of thirst, and that if I was to be rescued I must be handed over the side into the boat. I also told them that the Ramsgate boatman, who had been missing for three days, lay dying or dead of hunger and a broken leg in the forecastle. They descended and brought him up, and got him into the boat. They then lifted me, but though they worked nimbly and with judgment, I suffered agonies in their hands, and swooned yet again

before they got me fairly stowed away. Of course, my boat was gone, but she was fallen in with next day by a lugger, and carried into Margate. The Ramsgate boatman was so far from being dead that, after swallowing a dose of rum, which the fellows had brought with them, he sat up against a thwart and talked with something even of briskness. I asked him, in a faint voice, how it was that he had not answered me when I called to him later in the afternoon, and he replied, 'What was the good of talking, when I had owned that I couldn't help him, and that my case was as bad as his?'

"I lay helpless in bed or upon the sofa for hard upon three weeks. I don't think I shall ever board a wreck again, nor, indeed, is it probable that I shall be tempted to make a second excursion with a single pair of sculls to the Goodwin Sands."

JEM BURTON'S ADVENTURE.

AN old man, who had been boatswain of an Indiaman in the expiring days of John Company, lives at a seaside town that I was lately visiting. We had been friends a long while, and many a quaint and curious and impossible yarn had he entertained me with. His age was hard upon eighty, but he had all his faculties in a high degree, save his sight, that, as he was wont to say, "Was a bit injured, maister, through my losing an eye by catching it agin a hook that stood out from a wall I was groping my way past one dark night."

With this old man I thought I would spend an evening, and armed with a bottle of old Jamaica rum, some fine loaf sugar, and a bag of lemons, I repaired to his little cottage.

He was alone, a small bowed figure in pilot cloth and a sleeved waistcoat, a very neat and clean old man. He sat on a three-legged stool, close into a wide chimney, where a cheerful fire was burning, and a dropsical kettle singing. His one eye sparkled like an old ruby as it rolled upon the bottle of grog. I produced a paper of tobacco, and very shortly the old chap's nostrils were wide with the enjoyment of the fragrance of rum punch and of the leaf called Honeydew. No bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream could have matched, in that old man's opinion, the sweetness of the aromas which filled his little room just then. The sea tumbled noisily

within five minutes' walk of the door, and the sound of it filled the small thunder of the wind in the chimney with a noise as of a giant sobbing and groaning.

We had been chatting on fifty different things for above half an hour, when my old friend suddenly rose with the toil and caution of a rheumatic man, stepped to a cupboard, and took down from an upper shelf something of which I could not distinguish the nature as it lay in his hand.

"See that, maister?" he exclaimed, placing the object upon the table.

"Certainly I see it," I answered. "What is it? A hat?"

"Ay," he replied, "a three-cornered hat, sir. It'll be o'er a hoonred an' thirty year old. That hat belonged to a Frenchman my grandfeyther shot in a fight at sea. He always wore it arterwards. This was the hat he had on when he met with his wonderful adventure."

"What adventure was that?" I asked.

"Didn't I tell it 'ee?" he inquired.

"You never told me any story about your grandfather," said I.

"Well, afore I begin," he exclaimed, "would 'ee like to have this hat? You're very welcome to it."

I thanked him heartily, but said I could not think of depriving him of so interesting a family relic.

"Well," said he, "'tain't of no use to me, but it belongs to the family, as you say, sir, and so as it came to me by my feyther it had best be handed on by me to my son William, if so be as he's alive, for I han't heard of him for fourteen year," saying which, and instead of returning the hat to the cupboard, he put it on his head with a slight cock of it towards his one red and shining eye.

He then refilled his pipe, helped himself with a trembling hand to another draught of punch, and seated himself afresh upon his three-legged stool, looking a very strange and decayed old figure in the three-cornered hat, whilst the play of the firelight upon his cheek painted a hundred odd grimaces upon his face.

"It was in the middle of the last century," began the old yarn-spinner, "that my grandfeyther, old Jem Burton, was mate of a snow called the *Blushing Ann*. The maister was a man named Jacobs, and there went fourteen of a crew to her as forecastle hands. The owner was a London merchant, and he'd got into his head a big notion of South Sea trading, fancying that, spite of the Spaniards, there was a deal to be done in the way of trucking with the Indians along that vast seaboard of South America on the western side. So this here *Blushing Ann* was stowed full with toys and gingerbread rubbish for to trade with the Indians—beads and looking-glasses, the cheapest cutlery as could be bought, rolls of highly coloured material at a farden a fathom for a-winding round the loins, and for a-draping the head and shoulders with. Well, away goes the *Blushing Ann*, and away goes my grandfeyther, as mate of her. They made Cape Horn, I've heard say, five months arter leaving London river, and arter six weeks of heavy struggling and being blowed down to the latitude of fifty-eight degrees, they made westing enough to head north, most of 'em badly frostbitten, and one with the loss of his nose, as came off in the hand of a man as had laid hold of it to pull it for insolence in some galley fandango that had been kicked up. They got upon the coast, and did a bit of trading, I believe; but not much, for the Spaniards had got scent of their being in them seas, and they had to keep on shifting in a rolling-

stone sort of way as made the moss very slow in sprouting.

"Well, they had been cruising about for some four weeks or thereabouts, touching here and there, with a chap always at the masthead on the look-out for anything that might show in the shape of a sail, when one night, it being pretty black and quiet, Callao bearing sou'-east about thirty leagues, they made out the loom of a big ship close aboard of them. They was hailed in Spanish, and, not answering, was fired into. On this, Capt'n Jacobs got his wessel dead afore it, bringing the course to about west-son'-west, but kept all fast with his guns, of which he had eight, three of a side, twelve-pounders, and two brass nine-pounders, not choosing that the enemy should be able to follow him by the flash of his powder. Well, the Spaniard continued to pitch round shot in the direction of the *Blushing Ann*, but without doing the least hurt, so dark it was; and the snow being light, and of werry clean lines, slowly lengthened her distance, so that at daybreak next morn, nowt of the Spaniard was to be seen below the yawn of his forecourse. Yet the chase was continued; and it took 'em all day to sink that there Spaniard's topgarnsails out of sight. Darkness then coming on, they down stunsails and braced the yards hard up on the starboard tack, as northing was what they wanted, and besides they stood to lose the enemy by their shift of hellum.

"Well," continued the old fellow, smacking his lips over a hearty draught of punch, and stooping into the fire to light his long clay pipe by the flames, "all went right till about four o'clock in the morning. My grandfeyther had charge of the deck. Looking ahead, he caught sight of a sort of whiteness crawling upon the water, within half a mile of the wessel. It was still

dark though clear weather, the stars bright and plenty of 'em. He reckoned the faintness to be a bit of a sea mist blowing across the bow, and took a few turns along the deck, thinking no more about it, till presently, going to the rail and looking ahead again, he saw that the appearance, for all its crawling, was stationary, and was now showing thin and waving, like ye see steam a-floating under the glass of a railway station when a locomotive's blowing off. Heading west, he knew that there was no land nearer than by a good many scores of leagues, and as the northing they wanted to make obliged a close luff, he kept the snow as she was, never doubting that it was just a shred of vapour which they'd shove through and be clear of arter sailing their own length.

"But no sooner was the *Blushing Ann* into this here thickness as far aft as her foremast, when she touched, gritted, and swung starn round, grinding hard as she did so; then took a small list to port and lay still, there being no swell to speak of, and the breeze a very small wind. Ye can imagine the consternation. The capt'n and all hands came rushing up on deck. Now it was that my grandfeyther took notice of a smell of brimstone in the air, though there was no flavey of the sort, ontill the vapour was a-circling about the wessel. There was a deal of rushing about, bawlings for the hand-lead, orders to get the pinnace swung up out of the hold where it lay stowed, according to the custom of them days, letting go of halliards and clewing up of sails and seeing arter the kedje and the like. But they hadn't been hard and fast five minutes, scarce had time, indeed, to collect their wits, when they discovered that the land was a-growing up under 'em, and hoisting of 'em into the air, with the steam so thick all about 'em, and the

smell of sulphur so powerful, that they could scarce see or breathe.

"Well, sir, the maister, who was an owld hand, right away onderstood that the *Blushing Ann* had tailed on to the top of a wolcanic island that wasn't done growing. His men were for getting the pinnace over at once, but he couldn't find heart to leave the snow that lay sound and snug, and whilst he hesitated the island kept on growing till the craft rose keel out, and he saw the head of the mountain lifting yellow out of the dark sea. The crew lost narve. They stood like men blasted by lightning. The pinnace wasn't to be got out of the hold as ye lower a boat in these days from the davits; and they rightly perceived that, at the rate the land was heaving up under 'em, they'd be too high up to make any use of their boat by the time they'd got tackle aloft and swayed her out.

"Well, sir, my grandfeyther would say that at sunrise the head of the mountain had risen twenty feet above the sea line, the sides up and down like the edge of a cliff, with the merest trifle of slope, polished as an eggshell, and no more chance of getting down it short of falling than of a chap's floating in the air by holding his arms out. Indeed, it was like the thinner end of an egg with the top flattened in a sort of broken way, as ye'd notice in an egg after you'd hit it with a spoon; and there lay the *Blushing Ann*.

"Vessels in them days was built so corpulent, with a bilge like an open umbrella, that they pretty nigh sat upright when adry, and, as my grandfeyther would say, the inclination was not such as to cause them any inconvenience. What was to be done? The island had stopped growing at about two and twenty foot, but as they had but one boat, they dursn't risk her by lowering

her down the side; at least the capt'n was agin it, though the men was for it, saying that they wern't blooming sea-gulls, and that nature never intended them to live atop of a naked rock; that the boat was bound to swim if they got a couple of derricks over and lowered her stem and starn, when they could prowision and water her and enter her hand over hand. But, as I says, the capt'n was agin it. The fact is, he had money locked up in that there *Blushing Ann*, and he kept on a-fortifying of his mind by all sorts of hopes, as men will as haven't the heart to look the truth in the face. He broached a cask of rum for the sailors, and made 'em a speech; told 'em that when he was a young man, he'd read deep in geography, and knew all about these here islands, and how they was formed.

" 'They rise,' says he, 'like grog blossoms on a man's nose or boils on a man's back; they last a bit, and then they disappear. When the airth gets overheated, these here gilguys follow; they're like a rash. Compared to the size of the airth, a helevation of this sort is no more than a wart compared to the size of a man. Stand by,' says he, 'and it'll sink and leave us afloat with nothen to pump out, too, for she rose so gradual that I'll lay my head to a rat's tail that she ain't so much as strained a butt.'

" Well, sir, the steam cleared away at noon, the sea lay very calm, and everything was properly quiet. The men rolled the canvas up, and were turned to upon the rigging, to see all taut, in case the island should give under too wiolently. They kept a bright look-out, and even the Spaniard that had run 'em into this mass would have been a welcome sight; but nothen hove into view. In fact there was nothen much to come in them days where they was. The great South Sea was a good

deal more talked about than navigated. To keep 'em in heart, the maister ordered a vast kettle of punch to be brewed, and they swallowed it so plentifully that most of them fell down stupid. The maister got singing songs in the cabin, and my grandfeyther jined in the chorus; and the long and short of it was, that afore the moon rose that night, a little arter nine o'clock, all hands was in a sound snore.

"Well, Jem Burton, as my grandfeyther was named, awoke out of a dream in which he thought he was inside of a big lumbering waggin that was going to cross a bridge which was bound to break right in the middle, and he was holding on inside a-sweating very freely, when, as I says, he woke up. The cabin lamp was out. It was pitch-dark. He felt the *Blushing Ann* trembling and shivering as if she was something alive in an agony o' fear. The likes of that sensation, he used to say, was never afore felt by mortal man. He groped his way on deck, and found it dark as the inside of a sack. The smell of brimstone was werry strong, but it was too black to see if there was any steam about. One thing he took notice of—there was so heavy a silence that it was like being in the heart of a vault. There was not the least stir of the sea sounding, not the smallest noise of sound in the rigging. All the stars had gone too; it was black as thunder all round and overhead.

"My grandfeyther made his way back to the cabin, kindled the lamp, and, arter a vast deal o' trouble, managed to wake the maister. They went on deck together, and on putting the lantern over the side they saw smooth walls all round them.

"'Why, where are we?' says the maister.

"'Tell ye what I think,' says my grandfeyther, 'the inside of the wolcano that hoisted us up has given, being

mere powder and ashes, as the hearts of these here consarns mostly be, and let us down. We may be five mile deep for all we know.'

" 'By thunder !' says the maister.

" With this he falls a-bawling to his men, and every cry he raises is answered by like woices coming in echoes from the walls round about.

" Well, the men being routed up, gets lights, with the help of which they were able to see that the *Blushing Ann* lay jammed in what looked like the shaft of a mine. Her bowsprit was gone, and she hung fixed forwards and aft. They dropped the lead over the side, and it was lowered sixty fadom afore it touched bottom. So there they was, jammed in the middle of this here shaft, three hundred and sixty feet above whatever the soil might be, but how far from the opening atop where the ocean was they couldn't say at all. You might rummage all the yarns the wide world over and never come across the like of such an account of a quandary as this. For all they knew the bottom of this here mine was still slowly settling deeper and deeper, so that it might come to their hanging over a depth that might end in going as far down as the middle of the airth, where all the fire is. At any moment flames might burst out and wither 'em up. Or the snow might break her back, go in halves, and tumble clattering down into the tremendous blackness of this wolcanic hole. Of course they gave themselves up for lost, 'specially when my grandfeyther, casting his eye aloft, knew that, dark as it was down there, it was daylight up above, by seeing a circle of glimmering blue, no bigger to the eye than a crown piece, hovering like a star overhead. *That* made them see how fur the mouth of this wolcanic mine was, and how terrible deep the *Blushing Ann* had settled,

"Now, sir," continued the old man, pulling his three-cornered hat a little more to his one eye, "the time passed. The onhappy crew of the snow lived in darkness, never dreaming of deliverance, and concluding that every hour was to be their last, till wan day they heard a noise as of the streaming of water. They threw their lamps over and saw the clear brine sweeping like a weil of crystal down the walls, and they could hear it foaming and roaring as it struck the bottom.

" 'Well,' says the maister to my grandfeyther, 'we're to be drowned, arter all, Jem, and better that death, mate, than burning.' "

"The water continued to rush in. The men got the pinnace, stowed her with water and food, and chocked her on to a level keel, that she might lift fair when the water came. And then all hands got into her and waited. But you may reckon their astonishment and delight when they felt their old barkey beginning to sway and groan and grind to the pressure of the water under her, till all on a sudden she broke away clear, and up she slowly went as the rising water carried her. There was nothing to be done but to keep quiet and wait. The shaft was wider atop than at bottom, and the snow found more room as she rose. Then, again, the walls were as smooth as if they'd been polished—they was pumice-stone in short, without a single knob or elbow for the *Blushing Ann* to hook herself agin. In this fashion they floated fair into the open day. There was a great break in one side of the walls of the crater, and it was through this that the water had poured. They sounded and found just depth enough for the snow to get out. Thereupon they fell a-towing of her in the pinnace, and within two hours of their coming up to the

surface they had drawn her clear of the wolcano, and were making sail to a light southerly air.

"And this," said the old man, taking the three-cornered affair off his head and looking at it, "was the hat my grandfeyther wore all the time he was down under the sea in that there shaft. You're sure you wouldn't like to have it, sir?"

I again declined, thanking him very much, and, after smoking another pipe with him, I took my leave, observing that the brilliance of his one eye was fast fading, whilst his speech too grew fitful.

A SMUGGLER'S LAIR.

I was lately taking a walk under some high white cliffs along a broad platform of brown sand in company with an old nautical friend. We were full of talk, chatting away over past times, of changes that had happened in the merchant service and the like, when he came to a halt abreast of a flat front of rock striking giddily down betwixt two groin-like spires of cliff, as if this formation had been artificially buttressed up, though it was as purely a bit of nature as any other part of the coast.

"Look at those holes," he exclaimed, pointing to three or four apertures yawning black to the strong white light in the atmosphere.

"Aged warrens for the running of goods," said I.

"I wish they were not out of reach," he exclaimed. "I have sometimes thought that holes and corridors in cliffs, like those yonder, should be worth exploring. Lengths of the coast all round England are honey-combed. Surely there must be a deal worth finding still hidden in some of those black silent recesses."

I shook my head. "What is to be met with?" said I. "Any overlooked contraband stuff will have rotted ages ago out of all value. How would a bale of silk, for instance, look, after a century of storage in the heart of a cliff? How would tea taste, how would tobacco relish, after a hundred years?"

"Well now," said he, passing his arm through mine,

and marching me forwards, "instead of falling into an argument on a groundwork of pure speculations, I'll spin you an A 1 copper-bottom smuggling yarn, as true as that sky over our head is blue, or call it mottled for the sake of accuracy. It'll do something to discredit that shake of the head of yours. Depend upon it, my friend, there are more things under earth and hidden in the black heart of such old nodding terraces as these here than are dreamt of in any sort of philosophy short of what goes to the manufacture of fiction for boys.

"It will have happened seven years ago come the fifteenth of next month. My poor wife had been dead a year; my son Tom—my only child, you know—was at sea on a two years' voyage, and I was living alone in London. My income was small—as it still is, worse luck!—but I had made up my mind to quit the sea once and for ever, and I could find nothing that pleased me to do ashore to enable me to add to the interest I obtained out of my slender investments. Well, there came a loathing for London upon me. I sickened of the ceaseless roaring of the streets, the selfish shoving and shouldering of crowds, and seemed to draw my breath with difficulty for the want of an horizon. A sailor is a duck in more than the sweet sense which the ladies have in mind when they apply the term to him. He must live near some sort of water, if it be only a Ball's Pond.

"A hankering after old Ocean took possession of me; I felt that in a house atop of a cliff, a good telescope within reach of my hand, plenty of baccy in the locker, regular processions of ships right abreast of my front windows, and a 'longshore Jack or two to spin a yarn with, life would pass more merrily with me than ever it could at Lower Clapton.

"So one morning I weighed, and started to look for

a house on the coast. No matter the name of the district: you are just the man to go and print what I'm telling you, spite of your sleepy look, as though you were keeping one ear for yourself, giving me the other; and you'll find out why caution has to be the word with me by the time I'm through, as Jonathan says. It was a bold sea coast, a range of cliff higher than these by twenty or thirty feet; desolate and wild for miles, with gaps and chasms through which you could see the ocean like a bit of a great lidless eye peering through as though to get a view of the land beyond; flocks of grey and white gulls fetching odd human echoes out of the rocks with their puppy-dogs' saw-like cries, and a big surf with the weight of a large sea in it rolling in like clouds of steam and dissolving in thunder. There was a very little town of houses, scarce more than a village, hanging in a queer sort of huddle to the eye on a slope in a bight of the coast, with a ravine smooth as a carriage-drive, but mighty steep, coming on down out of the main street to the sands at the base.

"To the right of this place—call it to the north, rather—something a little within a mile of the town, stood a small house, a kind of cottage, stoutly built of greystone, with a roof and chimney-stack fit to outlive a century of gales. It was to let. The owner was a cobbler, a little withered man in horn-rimmed spectacles, whose broken-down shop hardly suggested the occupant as a house owner. He seemed astonished when I asked to look at the house, and then grew very nimble and eager, bustling about for the keys, whilst he praised the magnificence of the view the building commanded.

"'Is it an old house?' said I, as we walked towards it.

"'Old enough to be seasoned,' said he; 'old enough

to be able to keep its legs when the wind blows. No rattling of vindies in that house; no smoking of chimbleys. Ne'er a better house in the United Kingdom. My precious eyes! what money's been put into it.'

"'Long unlet?' said I.

"'Well, not long enough to hurt,' said he.

"'Who last occupied it?' I inquired.

"'Why, Admiral Trunnel,' says he; 'he used to say the house kept him alive. He'd ha' died long afore but for his being so partial to the building.'

"We arrived at the house, and I inspected it. It was built like a line-of-battle ship, as weather-tight a structure as heart could desire. The rooms were small, but they yielded me all the accommodation I required. At the back was a kitchen, a bit of a wing, as strong as a fragment of fortress.

"'If you've got any wines to stow,' said the cobbler, 'there's a regular vault downstairs.'

"'Let's have a look at it,' said I.

"He lifted the latch of a strong, thick, wooden door at the extremity of the passage, and I saw a flight of stone steps sinking into darkness.

"'Got e'er a lucifer about ye?' said the cobbler; 'I fear you won't be able to see without a light.'

"I had a box of wax matches in my pocket, one of which I struck. The cobbler led the way. I held the little flame above my head, and by the feeble light of it witnessed a large, low-pitched, cavernous chamber, with walls that had long ago been whitewashed, but were now grimy with the soiling fingers of Time. There were many huge cobwebs clustered about the corners and ceiling, like curls and feathers of tobacco smoke hovering in the stagnant atmosphere. The earthy smell of the interior satisfied me that it was dry.

“ ‘This vault will be of no use to me,’ said I; ‘but it is out of the road and not damp, and it is effectually shut off.’

“I inquired the rent as we mounted the stone steps. The price he named was absurdly small; and, as the building perfectly accommodated itself to my wants in every respect, I arranged with him then and there to take it, and returned with him to his shop to sign an agreement.

“I got my furniture from London, and it was not long before I had settled down in my new home. One servant sufficed to attend to my wants. She had been in my service two years, and was very well content to leave London to live by the sea, but she winced when she first saw the house, and when she sent a look along the desolate line of coast to right and left. I slept at an inn at the adjacent town whilst my furniture was on the road, and had asked questions about my new home, but those of whom I inquired had nothing to tell me beyond that there was a tradition in the neighbourhood that the house had been built in the beginning of the century by a man who had grown rich as a receiver of contraband goods, and that for a long while there was a deal of smuggling done through him, and those who followed him, down to the time when the contraband business pretty nigh died out, thanks to a wiser policy of Customs dues, backed by the steadfast patrolling of the Preventive men. That was pretty well all I gathered, and there was nothing in it to make anything of.

“It was late in October when I occupied the house for the first time, and it blew half a gale of wind that night. Heaven bless me, it was like being at sea again, what with the roar of the wind all that way up, the shriek of it down the wide chimneys, the groaning of the

breakers away down a hundred feet deep, and the dim warring noise of sea hurling against sea coming for leagues off the dark wild surface of the ocean! However, I slept like a top, but my servant, a Londoner, was a good deal scared, and scarcely closed her eyes. Next day she came to me with a face as long as a wet hammock, and told me that the grocer's assistant who called for orders had told her to mind her eye, for the house was haunted.

" 'With what?' said I.

" 'He didn't know,' she answered.

" 'What does the fool want to stuff such rubbish as that into your head for?' said I.

" 'He said an old admiral lived here about four years ago, and died in the room you hoccupies, sir—he pointed to the windows—and that the cobbler that owns the property sent his darter, who is since gone dead, to sleep in the house for a week, in order to hair it after the admiral's body had been carried away; and she slep' two nights in the house, and then went home and took ill, saying that she'd received a fright; but what it was the cobbler kept locked up in his own bosom.'

" 'Tush!' cried I, 'get about your work, now, Martha. There's nothing worse haunts this house than a grocer's assistant, I dare say.'

" 'Well, all went smoothly for a week. Already I was feeling twice as hearty as ever I did in London. The cobbler came up to see how I got on, and I told him I was very well satisfied, as, indeed, I had reason to be, for I don't mind telling you I only paid eighteen pounds a year rent for a house worth every penny of fifty as I should have thought.

" 'Then came a Sunday night. I had walked over to church in the morning, and the doctor of the village,

a smartish young fellow, who hadn't been there very long, looked in in the evening, and between us we killed a couple of hours very agreeably, helped by a whisky bottle and a pipe of tobacco. He left me at ten, and half an hour later I went to bed, after, according to my custom, seeing the doors and windows secured and the fires out.

"It was a middling quiet night, clear, with stars to the horizon, and a gust of wind now and again coming over the edge of the cliff, in a sort of wailing noise, to my windows. All, saving that noise, was of a death-like stillness, as you may believe, not even the crawl of the surf vexing the quiet of that lonely stretch of coast. I got into bed, read for half an hour, then blew out the light and fell asleep.

"I was awakened by a tapping on the door. It was pitch-dark, with just a spot of yellow light abreast of my bed, the reflection through the keyhole of a candle shining outside.

"'Who's there?' I sung out.

"'Me, sir, Martha,' answered my servant.

"'What's the matter?' I inquired.

"'There's a bell a-ringing somewhere in this house, sir. It's a fearfully scaring sound. I'm awfully frightened, sir.'

"'Wait a minute,' I called, struck a light, drew on some clothes, and opened the door. 'Let's hear this bell now,' said I.

"She was as white as a ghost, and her candlestick shook in her hand. I strained my ear, but could catch nothing resembling the sound of a bell. I listened for five minutes with the utmost patience; nothing was audible but the muffled crying of the wind about the house.

“ ‘You’re in a dream, Martha,’ said I.

“ ‘There—there it is now, sir! D’ye hear it? Listen!’ she cried.

“ ‘Sure enough, as she spoke, I distinctly heard a dull smothered sound as of the clang of a bell, whence proceeding it was impossible to conjecture, save that the note made one think of it as tolling underground. For the matter of that it might have passed for the rattle of a chain dragged over a stone floor.

“ ‘Deuced odd!’ I exclaimed, not liking it at all. ‘But it is no house-bell.’

“ ‘We had but two, in short—one for the house-door and one for the parlour, and both were hung in the kitchen, and rang clearly enough when pulled. Is this the ghost they talk about, I thought.

“ ‘Get you back to bed, Martha,’ said I, ‘I’ll see to this. There’s nothing to frighten one in the sound of a bell. Away with you, now; leave your door open, and when I’ve discovered the cause of the noise, I’ll sing out to you.’

“ ‘The only weapon I owned in the wide world was an old sword that had belonged to my father, a formidable-looking bit of iron when unsheathed, with a life coming into one out of the grip of the hilt of it that made one feel about a foot taller. A pistol is very well, but I would rather face a difficulty with a weapon of this kind than with a firearm, though as big as a blunderbuss, and full of slugs at that. As a man might swallow a dram for the Dutch courage it yields him, so I grasped my great sword for such animation as I could obtain out of it, and holding the candle over my head I made my way downstairs.

“ ‘I halted in the passage, and listened. All remained still for some minutes; then I caught the faint tones of

a bell, muffled as before, but audible enough. I was now cocksure, however, that the sound rose from the bottom of the house, underground, and at a little distance away, too; whereupon I lifted the latch of the door that led to the big vault or cellar below, and descended the steps, holding the candle high, peering with all my eyes, with the point of my sword in advance of me, ready to run amuck and tilt at the first shadow that should flit in front of me. The bell ceased; but whilst I stood listening and gazing round at the gloomy walls, with their hideous tapestry of cobwebs, I was sensible of a low vibratory stir in the atmosphere that I instinctively set down as the tremble or echoing of the cliff to the beat of the breakers at their base. The bell chimed again, dull, sluggish, muffled, a most funeral note.

"Where on earth did the sound arise from? It seemed as though it were tolled in some next room. I tried the right wall with my sword, and found it as hard as cement; then the left—it was equally impenetrable. I advanced to the wall directly fronting the stone steps, and jobbed it. The blade penetrated here! I put the candle down and scraped a bit, and discovered that there was either a door let into the wall or that an aperture had been sealed up with timber; but whitewash and dirt and cobwebs made it look all one with the other walls. Whilst I paused the bell tolled once more. I was now positive that the sound proceeded from the compartment beyond this wooden barrier; but, to make quite sure, I scraped a small portion of it clean with the sword and laid my ear flat against it, and then most unmistakably I heard the bell ringing within very slowly, with a stoppage of some minutes, then swaying again.

"I stood considering. The conclusion I arrived at was that there was a vault similar to the one I was in

just beyond, that it probably sloped in a smuggler's corridor to an outlet in the cliff, and that the wind, blowing in uncertain gusts through this tunnel, swung some small bell that had been suspended for a purpose that can only be conjectured. This theory fully satisfied me. I lingered, nevertheless, another ten minutes, but the bell rang no more. I then returned to my bedroom, calling, as I passed, to Martha that I had ascertained the cause of the sound, and that I would put an end to it in the morning.

"Before breakfast next day I shouldered a chopper, armed myself with a candle, and descended into the vault without saying a word to the servant. I closed the staircase door after me to stifle the sound of the blows I should be presently dealing. A night fear, as a rule, cuts an insignificant figure by daylight; but there was no daylight down here—the darkness was, indeed, as at midnight, and I must own to feeling a bit nervous, though I found some comfort in the chopper. I felt about over the wall with the edge of it, and having distinguished the timber from the solid part, I let fly.

"I am strong in the arms, and the chopper was a heavy one, and, after I had struck eight or ten times, crash flew a board as thick as a plank, followed by a sweep of ice-cold air that extinguished the candle. This I relighted, and applied myself afresh to what I now easily made out to be a row of stout planks nailed to crosswise beams above and below, coming out flush with the walls of the cavern in which I stood, and hermetically closing a small arched doorway, the keystone of which, to call it so, came a little below my chin. In a very short time I had knocked as much of the plank away as enabled me to enter; then, sheltering the flame of the

candle from the strong ice-cold draught, I passed into this outer room.

"You may imagine the momentary terror, however, that possessed me on my witnessing, in the corner of the cave, the figure of a man completely dressed, with his arm raised. I thought he was alive, but he remained so stirless that I took heart and approached him by a few strides, when I perceived that he was a skeleton. The skull grinned at me under what was apparently a fur cap. His coat came to his knees, to the height of which were drawn a pair of great jack-boots. He was in a squatting posture, with his back to the wall, and his lifted left arm I perceived was supported by its clutch of the handle at the extremity of a chain attached to a small bell that hung very nearly over his head. As I stood gazing at the ghastly object in silent horror, a gust of cold wind came in a loud melancholy moan through a black orifice that was undoubtedly a secret avenue through the cliff to the beach, the rush of air caused the skeleton's arm to sway and the chain to vibrate, though not sufficient motion was imparted to make the bell ring.

"However, I could now see how it was, so, to put an end to the unholy midnight sound, I released the bell-handle from the grip of the skeleton hand, and the arm dropped to the figure's side with a slow settling down that was infinitely terrifying."

My companion paused.

"Well?" said I, "I suppose you reported the discovery, and the skeleton was carried away?"

"Nothing of the sort," said he. "I went upstairs, ate my breakfast, and fell into a train of reflection. How was I to know but that there was a good booty to come at in that cave by hunting for it? I took a lantern with me downstairs after breakfast, and a couple of candles

as well, so as to obtain a good light, and passed an hour in a keen, thirsty search, striking every inch of the wall in the dream of obtaining a hollow echo, carefully examining the floor and ceiling, and penetrating the black corridor by a few feet, though I dared not go further for fear of a hole. My friend in the corner watched me with a mocking grin.

"Well, the place was as empty as Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard, and I was about to withdraw, much disgusted by disappointment, for my secret hopes had been very considerable, when I thought I would overhaul the pockets of my silent companion. It was an ugly job, but that was all. I very gingerly felt his coat, which had a great pocket on each side, protected by a flap. The feel of the cloth sent a shudder through me. In the right-hand pocket I found a tobacco-box, a tobacco-pipe of a very singular pattern, a greasy pack of cards, and a leather flask; but on dipping into the left-hand pocket I pulled out a bag so heavy that I guessed in an instant what I held. The mouth of it was secured by a rope yarn. This I cut with a trembling hand, and found the bag full of guineas. Here is one of them," said he, showing me a coin that dangled at his watch-chain.

"Of course, you stuck to the money?" said I.

"Indeed I did then," said he. "I took the bag upstairs, locked the parlour door to keep friend Martha away, and counted out two hundred and eighty-seven guineas, in guinea and half-guinea pieces, all of them of George III.'s time, clean and most agreeable to handle."

"Did you remain in the house?"

"No," he answered. "I took a sudden dislike to it. I knew I should never be able to keep a servant if the news of the discovery got abroad; and then, between ourselves,

I rather dreaded the approach of the long winter's nights and their howling winds with such a memory as that of the skeleton in the vault to carry to bed with me. So next day I told Martha that we were going; and having arranged with a man in the adjacent town for the removal of my furniture to a lodging that I took until I could find another house, I called upon the cobbler and put down a year's rent. 'I'm off,' said I. 'Why so?' cried the shrivelled little fellow. 'Go into the cellar,' said I, 'with a lighted candle, and you will find out. I'll look in again here in the course of a few hours.' I did so, and found him at work. 'Well?' said I. 'Well,' he answered, 'you're quite right to go.' And so the matter ended."

"Is not that a sort of story," said I, "which you would tell to the marines, but which you would not get the sailors to believe?"

"Pray accept it as a twister," said he, with a sly look and a dry smile, "for then you won't think it worth printing."

'LONGSHOREMEN.

A MAN with a dingy red face, discoloured by lines of veins, large protruding bloodshot eyes, oily and shining hair falling in a shower-bath of ringlets to his shoulders, earrings, immense trousers of a material that resembled blanket, half-wellington boots with the seams of them whitened by grease—this man stood attentively surveying me at a short distance, whilst I, seemingly unconscious of his regard, continued directing careless glances seawards at a small congregation of wind-bound ships. Suddenly he approached me, but with a dark and secret air, looking to right and left and behind him as he advanced, and treading as though consumed by a burglarious anxiety to make no noise.

“Could I speak a word with 'ee, sir?” he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper, looking again to the left and then to the right, and then over his shoulder.

“What do you want?” said I.

“Hush!” he whispered, with another look around; then, tapping his breast, “I've got a sample of cigars here fit to make the eyes an' mouth of the Prime Minister of England water if so be as he smokes.” Another anxious glance to the right, to the left, and then over his shoulder. “They was brought ashore this morning—smuggled!——” He shut one eye and pointed backwards with his thumb to the little congregation of ships.

"Darsn't produce 'em here. Too many eyes a starin'. D'ye mind just coming along with me? Won't keep ye a second, sir. But I say it as a plain sailor man, it's a hoppersportunity you ought to grasp. Ay, sir, it's just the one chance 'ee ought to seize."

He was very earnest, almost pathetic, and smote the mysterious parcel secreted in his bosom with most significant gestures, and his looks to right and left and over his shoulder were full of apprehension, and in the highest degree suggestive of booty, danger, and handsome bargains. I should have known better; but we are all bound to play the fool in our lives, and this was one of several opportunities for so doing which have presented themselves to me in the course of my career. He walked towards a side-street, I following. He kept me in the corner of his eye whilst he continued to glance around to make sure that our motions were unperceived.

It was a windy little street into which he led me, composed of boatmen's houses, with a strong smell of sou'-westers and oilskin leggings in the atmosphere, together with a hint of fried fish and vegetable water in the distance. We stood in a doorway—it might have been his own house—and then, after a cautious look up and down the street and up at the sky, he, in a dark, secret, but hurried manner, drew from his bosom a bundle of cigars—a parcel of fifty as I calculated—and said hoarsely, speaking with excitement—

"Twopence apiece, sir, and they're yourn. Ninepence is the price at the cigar merchants. They be too fine a smoke for the tobaccoonists to sell. Say eight bob for the lot."

He may have observed an indecision in my gaze.

"Seven bob, then," he cried, writhing in his immense trousers with eagerness and agitation. "Here, sir, here

they are," and in a smothering sort of way, as though he would conceal me with his large figure by hustling me, he began to thrust the packet into my pocket with many an anxious look to right and left as before.

Seven shillings for fifty choice Cuban cigars just smuggled out of a West Indiaman that had dropped anchor out yonder! The temptation was a strong one. I slipped the money into his hand and walked away, assuming an easy air of indifference, as though every other person in the street was a Customs officer in mufti. I carried my prize home, and on opening the package found the contents to be cigars indeed, but of that particular brand of choice Havana which tobacconists offer at a penny apiece, or seven for sixpence. I lighted one in sheer desperation, and came very near to poisoning myself with a few whiffs. I did not see my friend again for a week. Possibly he kept a bright look-out for me, and fell to certain manœuvrings whenever I hove in view. But at the expiration of the week I met him.

I instantly stopped, and cried "Hush!" lifting my forefinger, putting on much such another dark and secret manner as he had manufactured, whilst I glanced to right and left apprehensively as he had, with a look up at the sky and then down at the ground. "I say, my friend," I exclaimed in a whisper, and with a significant look at his breast, "I should like a word with you, but not here—we may be observed." I gazed cautiously round again. "Just step up this side-street, will you? We shan't be noticed there."

The expression of the man's face changed. He reckoned upon a bid for more cigars. All very darkly and secretly we repaired to the adjacent by-street, and I got into a doorway, to which I beckoned him. He approached. I looked fearfully to right and left, and

then, putting my lips to his ear, with immense enjoyment of his face of keen expectation, I said in as hoarse a whisper as I could contrive, "You're a damned thief. Hush!" and sending another look to right and left, I put my finger upon my lip and walked away.

This gentleman was a 'longshoreman, and I introduce him as a humorous example of a race of bold, hardy, enterprising men, who are to be found at every port and seaside town all around the English coast. Some of them are rogues, as my friend was, though I hasten to admit that I was rightly served; but the great mass of them are as fine a body of honest, fearless fellows—true Englishmen, real hearts of oak, ready to leap to the first call upon their great hearts as life-savers—as ever this country produced, whether for land or sea service. Most of them will smuggle if they can, but few are cheats in this direction; and though I have often bought tobacco from them that has never paid duty—for I must own to agreeing with Charles Lamb in his opinion of the Revenue as an abstraction—I have been tricked only once.

'Longshoremen are a community well worth studying. They are neither sailors nor landsmen, in which respect they have some affinity with the marine. There is a sort of vessel that, by reason of her peculiar rig, is called a "jackass barque." The term is slightly derisive, as signifying that the craft tries to look what she is not and never can be until the rig is changed. The expression might be borrowed for the 'longshoreman. To describe him as a jackass sailor would, I think, by the forecastle be esteemed a felicitous definition. There is no suggestion of disrespect intended or conveyed. A jackass-sailor is simply a man who lives by the sea without navigating it. 'Longshoreman is a

generic title for all these persons who get their living upon the coast, or, literally speaking, along the shore. They are boatmen or watermen, but hard times and the obligation of obtaining a livelihood compels them to enlarge their vocation by additional undertakings. They are unlicensed pilots; sometimes they will go a costermongering; they have been known to turn their hands to painting houses in the spring; at long intervals one or two of them will be found to ship in colliers for a coasting trip, though in the main they are the most home-keeping of all communities; they will catch sprats when the season comes, should nothing better offer. They are the people who man the lifeboats, and who have greatly added to the glory of the country as a nation of noble and splendid seafarers by their intrepid conduct. But their principal occupation is lounging. They are a sort of marine Micawbers, who are perpetually in expectation of something turning up, and who pass most of their days in lounging postures waiting for it to come. I have known a man to lounge for eight hours against one post, without exhibiting any signs of fatigue, and no further symptoms of uneasiness than was to be alleviated or corrected by rubbing around from one side of the post to the other. Many of them are armed with little telescopes, which they will extract from their breeches' pockets and put to their eye to examine anything resembling a sail in the offing, whilst they continue to lean. Their trousers are a noticeable feature of their calling. Indeed, a 'longshoreman may always be known by this garment. It is a sort of breeches which, should their occupant get out of them, would remain standing erect as though they possessed and lived a life of their own, and were quite independent of legs. No sailor on board ship could work in such trousers as the 'longshore-

men wears. To use the old expression, "they are big enough to hold wind to last a Dutchman a week." I do not know why these men should go so heavily clad in this way, unless, indeed, they have an eye to the contingency of rheumatism; for which disorder the 'longshoreman's unmentionables are rendered antidotal by the capaciousness of their pockets, wherein a man might carry without inconvenience half a sack of potatoes. This notion occurred to me through a 'longshoreman once stating that his remedy for "rheumatics" lay in potatoes, in proof whereof he produced a couple of handfuls, hard as shingle and black as coal, out of his trousers' pockets.

The 'longshoreman, in his capacity as boatman, is often the central figure of one's most agreeable holiday memories. To recall him is indeed to think of the long stretch of sparkling sand; the creaming of the silken summer breaker, the seething of whose foam falls with the refreshment of the voice of a fountain upon the ear; the azure sea, wrinkled with the breeze, rich with gleaming shafts of canvas, glorious with the noontide effulgence; the long line of coast, the diversions of the beach, the belaboured donkey staggering under the weight of the fat woman whose bonnet has fallen upon her back, the squeaks and cries of Punch and Judy, the importunate photographer, the rows of bathing-machines with radish-shaped figures running in and out of them; these things, and much more, one's recurrence to the lounging figure of the boatman revives in bright and glowing colours upon the canvas of memory. His boat is on the shore, if his bark is not on the sea, and he is at hand when the hot days come--draped still in the absurd breeches and stout jersey of the fierce winter months, albeit the dog star is now raging--to coax the

excursionist into taking a sail or a row. His cry of "Boat, sir? Beautiful day for a row, mum! The hocean's like a lake this marning, miss," is a familiar sound the whole length of our seaboard round.

I have made a study of the 'longshoremen's entreaties to people to take a sail or a row with them, and have found them sufficiently various to afford good entertainment. There is the sulky, dejected boatman who utters the question, "Boat, sir?" mechanically, as an old clothesman might croak out, "Clo', clo'." He will put this question, "Boat, sir?" without the least regard to the age, infirmities, appearance, likeliness of the individual he addresses. His ejaculation is charged with depression: he is one of that sort of boatmen whom you will hear wishing that a "blooming airthquake 'ud come along and swallow us all up." I fancy that throughout his night's rest he goes on saying, "Boat, sir?" I have seen him slightly drunk, stumble against a post, and recoil from it with a maudlin apologetic "Boat, sir?" He is a 'longshoreman on whom life and the dreary winter season sit heavily—a burden which the brief, swift, summer season does not give him time to let fall from his soul. He utters the words, "Boat, sir?" as though he loathed the sound, as though the inquiry bred not the faintest sense of expectation in him. Indeed, the acceptance of his offer overwhelms him with astonishment, and I do not know that this kind of man is always pleased when he gets yes for an answer, for it obliges him to quit the stone post over which he might otherwise continue to hang, and temporarily extinguishes all excuse for uttering those sea blessings which he heaps upon the people who decline, and of which the delivery in smothered accents does unquestionably soothe his spirits, though they leave him still deeply dejected.

Another type of 'longshoreman is the nimble, cheerful, persuasive boatman, who will accompany you on a considerable walk before he abandons you as a chance for earning a shilling or two. "There's no happiness to equal rowing," he tells you; "there's no joy ashore to rival the sensations ye gets in sailing. The sea's smoother to-day nor the head of a pot of yale. Rowing developes the constitution. It makes ladies' waists small, mum—ay, but it *do*, though. Well, if ye ain't for rowing, what say now, sir, to you and the lady having an hour of fishing? There's lines aboard, and that one-armed man there 'll sell 'ee bait enough to catch a grampus. No fish about? Lard save ye! There was Bill Jaffers just come ashore along with a party he'd been out with and his boat was pretty nigh in a sinking state with the fish they'd caught. Well, perhaps not *soles*, mum; for ye need to trawl for the likes of them; but cod as long as my arm, and longer tew; plaice square enough to cover that man's back there; strings of beautiful codling—" and so he goes on most perseveringly, until he is brought to by want of breath, whereupon he commonly expectorates with a cheerful countenance, following on with the remark that it is uncommonly hot, to be sure, and that if he drinks your health now it'll be the first drop of beer that has moistened his lips since Saturday night.

Another type of 'longshoreman I am acquainted with is the surly, rather menacing boatman who thrusts up against you quite uncomfortably close, whilst he exclaims in a suppressed voice, as of a man who restrains his passion with difficulty, "Boat, sir? Don't say no, sir. Ain't airned a blooming shilling this week, sir." The atmosphere usually gathers a spiritous flavour from the presence of this kind of boatman. He is too surly

to ask you for a drink, but it is strange if on your declining his proposal to go for a row or sail with him, you do not catch enough as he retreats to enable you to gather that he does not wish well to either your eyes or your limbs.

I once knew a pious boatman. He was a man of advanced years, in a yellow sou'-wester, wide blanket-like trousers, a long pea-coat, and silver locks, very carefully nursed, flowing down his back. He was a venerable object, and tolerably successful in his capacity of appealing without speaking. Whether you recognized his claims upon you or not he blessed the Lard. His insistence upon blessing himself and you, no matter whether you liked it or not, or what might come of it, was truly Pecksniffian. He was punctual in his attendance at church, arriving a little late, perhaps, taking his place very meekly, exhibiting a spotless, most reverend figure when he had put his sou'-wester under his feet. He would withdraw before the rest of the congregation, and was commonly to be found standing in the porch, where he would wait with his eyes upturned, yellow sou'-wester in hand, until everybody was gone. Elderly ladies held this boatman in high esteem, and though he fared somewhat hard in the winter, he did in the summer very much better than most of the other 'longshoremen who were making the air resound with their cries of "Boat, sir?"

I have often sought to discover how the 'longshoreman manages to scrape through the long winter without aid from the parish, without begging on the streets; but never could arrive at the truth. Sometimes his earnings for a whole month will not exceed the value of a handful of fish which he may obtain from some smack perhaps for making a rope's end fast for her. Yet somehow or

other he always manages to keep his pipe full, and I seldom pass the jug entrance of the Parched Twins public-house without hearing his voice more or less exerted in a heated argument. My theories of the 'longshoreman's means of subsistence in winter extend to this: that his wife takes in washing; that though he lives in a back street in a small slanting house, with a green door and the model of a cutter in the bow window, his wife has a lodger; that now and again he earns a trifle as a pilot or as one of a crew in a hovelling job; that when severely put to it he will throw a few fish upon a barrow and go roaring through the streets; and that on the strength of his owning a boat, supplemented by the prospects of the summer, he obtains enough credit from his baker—of meat he may have forgotten the flavour—to keep him at all events supplied with bread.

Of all our working classes I cannot imagine that any deserves more pity and sympathy than the 'longshoremen during the months which intervene between the close of one holiday season and the beginning of another. Their sufferings are little known, because, sailor-like, they shrink from obtruding them. Something of a shipmate's feeling lives amongst them, and they will help one another at a great pinch, but to little purpose, for their poverty all round is very great. Perhaps it is to be wished that the 'longshoremen did not lounge quite so much; but no doubt his own excuse for this would be that he has nothing to do. His chief business, as I have said, is to keep a look-out for anything that may happen, and he may as easily discharge this duty whilst overhanging a wall or leaning against a post as whilst standing erect. But his claim upon the attention of the public, and more emphatically yet upon the recognition

of sailors, lies in his record as a life saver. He may lounge indeed, but let the signal be given, let him understand that there are men perishing away out at sea, and there is no bluejacket that could outstrip him in a race to the lifeboat.

I suppose that the commonplace could not be more fully expressed than by the aspect of a 'longshoreman—his face a dusky purple surface of warts, knobs, and wrinkles, his hands deep buried in his breeches' pockets, a dingy clay pipe forking bowl downwards from his lips; whilst, on the other hand, the heroic could not be more magnificently illustrated than by the picture or imagination of this same man swathed in oilskin, girt with cork, seated in the lifeboat and giving battle to the wild and thunderous forces of the black tempest and the maddened ocean. Such a contrast is of no other vocation conceivable. In what other walk of life shall a man step in a breath, so to speak, from the dead dull level of his vocational prosaics into a sphere of almost transcendental sublimity of action? It is impossible to picture a nobler figure than the British 'longshoreman makes when out upon the wild waters, desperately struggling after the deliverance of a miserable, perishing crew. The field of battle yields no such spectacle. There is scarce an act of heroism but pales in the glare of the shining performance of the lifeboat-man. He goes to his work in cold blood; there is nothing to stimulate him, no cheers of comrades, no rage of conflict. The bugle is not for him, nor the stirring roll of the drum. He leaps from the warmth of his blankets to the first beating upon his door, to the first intimation that there is a signal of danger abroad and that the lifeboat crew are wanted. He does not stop to dress, but, flinging his garments over his arm, he struggles into them and

wraps them about him as he runs. The black night is again and again made hoary by whirling clouds of snow; the foam of the tormented sea palpitates upon the eye amid the howling gloom; the roar of the distant colliding surges sounds fitfully amid the pauses in the thundering of the huge breakers boiling to the giant foot of the cliff, or leaping white to the height of a ship's mast as they smite the low, fanglike rocks, and rage seething and steeping up the long dark shelf of beach. Afar, where the shadow of the tempest seems to lie blackest against the pallid faintness of foaming waters, there winks from time to time a little spark with a glancing of yellow light, but the sound of the gun is swept to leeward by the blast, and is as inaudible to the ear ashore as the cry of an infant out there would be. Up into another part of the blackness a tiny ball of green or violet fire will sail and vanish in a shower of spangles; whilst further on yet the eye catches a steady speck of light that denotes a flare, the firebrand of the shipwrecked! but the snow-squall sweeps over the whole like a pall of smoke from the cannons of contending fleets, and the sight turns blind to the roaring scene of vaporous dimness and savage breakers close at hand, hurling in a fury of foam out of the ashen throbbing of the deep.

It needs the heart of a lion to face it all—the heart of a lion with glorious human courage besides, born of a grand intrepidity of resolution to save or to perish. It is not a father bent on succouring his child, it is not a husband whose wife may be drowning out there, it is not a loved and cherished friend by whom that tragic appeal of fire is made yonder. The men who must perish, if the lifeboat does not reach them, may not even be Englishmen; but *that* matters nothing. They

are human creatures, they are children of that great Being whose presence is never felt so close to the heart as on such a night as this at sea. The 'longshoreman asks to know no more, and to preserve them he quits his wife and his bairns, turns his back upon the little home whose door he may never again enter, upon the humble roof that poverty may raze to the ground if he be not restored to keep it propped by his labour. He quits everything that is dear to him, and with his life in his hand plunges into the black commotion, in the fearless discharge of the most beautiful, manly, unselfish duty that mortal creature could undertake the fulfilment of.

But one must live long by the seaside, and in close sympathy with its semi-marine population, to do justice to the 'longshoreman. My own obligations to him are numerous. His queer yarns have yielded me many hours of diversion; many a quiet laugh have I enjoyed over his floundering person and various character, his surliness, his arguments, his cheerful acceptance of hard times, his bland hints upon the subject of thirst; and I am not ashamed to say that more than one exploit of his, whether related to me or witnessed by me, has moved my mind with thoughts which were not too deep for tears, as I might know by my suffused eyes.

SAILORS' PLEASURES.

I SHOULD think that before the time of Dibdin the British public had but little faith in the representation of Jack's pleasures when at sea. Dibdin was pensioned by Pitt to write what a son of the musician, in a memoir of him, calls "War Songs." Men were wanted for ships, and the inspirations of the bard were courted and paid for to serve as an auxiliary to the pressgang. It was inevitable that Dibdin should heap every glowing colour he could think of upon his canvas. It was not Jack who was to be courted; he was already *there*. No sailor was to be seduced by Dibdin's strains. The tar knew the life too well to be fooled by rhymes referring almost wholly to lovely Nan and blushing Poll, to bowls of punch and endless forecastle jollifications, though he heartily admired the music to which these alluring and deceitful notions were set, and sang the songs as enthusiastically as if he believed in them. Dibdin wrote for landmen, for the youth of the agricultural districts, for the frozen-out bricklayer, for the starving gardener, all of whom were to be transformed by the boatswain's rattan into very sturdy active mariners, quite equal to the duty of rolling up canvas and fighting for England, Home, and Beauty. The yokel, of course, would know nothing about the sea, and he was to be easily fascinated, as though he was some little schoolboy, by melodious invitations to a life on the ocean wave, where guineas

were as plentiful as hips and haws before a hard winter, where the fiddle was always playing a merry jig, where dark-eyed or yellow-haired girls were as numerous as the ports at which the saucy frigate or the cathedral-like line of battle ship called. He would eagerly cock an attentive ear, for instance, at—

“ Bold Jack the sailor, here I come,
 Play how d’ye like my nib ?
My trousers wide, my trampers rum,
 My nab and flowing jib.
I sails the seas from end to end,
 And leads a joyous life;
In every mess I find a friend,
 In every port a wife.”

Or at such a chorus as this—

“ Singing, laughing,
 Dancing, quaffing,
Take it cheerily and merrily,
And save up his cash for his girl ashore.”

Or at this—

“ With a jorum of diddle,
 A lass and a fiddle,
Ne’er shall care in the heart of a tar be found,
 And while upon the hollow deck,
To the sprightly jig our feet shall bound,
 Take each charmer round the neck
And kiss in time to the merry round.”

The reiteration of songs and choruses of this kind necessarily resulted in persuading the land-going public that the sailor’s life, whether afloat or on shore, was the very jolliest of all imaginable careers. Jack, who was in the secret, might protest, point to his messkid, to his rude uncomfortable home in the ’tweendecks, tell of a hundred hardships, expose his wounds, exhibit a back flayed with the cat-o-nine tails, and ask when he

had served his country, lost his eyes or his limbs, what other fate was before him but the workhouse or the business of howling out songs in the streets? But the public knew better! The truth was to be found in Dibdin's songs and the scores of compositions written in imitation of this master; and though, to be sure, when Dibdin had served the ministerial purpose, his pension was taken from him, and he was meanly and outrageously used by the people whom he had been fool enough to hire himself out to as a hack; yet his insistence upon Jack's joys at sea made a tradition of the absurdity. The word of a man who knew absolutely nothing whatever of the ocean calling, who had never witnessed an engagement at sea or made a voyage, whose verses are quite exasperatingly full of mistakes in their reference to nautical terms and the like—Dibdin's word was accepted; and the public, unwilling to limit his assurances to the navy, extended the nonsense to the merchant service; so that to this very hour a mass of the population of the greatest maritime country on the face of the world scarcely doubts that when a sailor goes to sea, no matter in what sort of craft, nor under what kind of flag, he has little more to do than to dance hornpipes, toast his distant sweetheart in jorums of rum punch, or lean, pipe in mouth, over the windless end, spinning yarns with his shipmates whilst the wind blows his vessel along.

Now what am I to say of sailors' pleasures at sea? I pretty well know what they consist of. It would not be true to affirm that Jack has no pleasures; but the catalogue is so dismally meagre that I vow there is scarce anything to be said about it. It is the slenderer in this age for the want of grog, to begin with. The economical owner, who seldom exhibits any but a re-

munerative concern in Jack's condition, has put an end to the daily *tot*, though here and there, I believe, one may hear of it as being served out every Saturday night. Possibly, as sailors aboard English ships are in these days chiefly foreigners, the old customary cheerful thimbleful served out at the capstan when the bird-like pipings of the boatswain's silver whistle had summoned the crew, is not missed or even thought of; but I can remember the time when the little dram made one of the very few pleasures merchant sailors enjoyed when afloat. It was something to look forward to, something to "grease the ways" for the cube of horse or the clammy dollop of pork that was to be swallowed at dinner time. It put a little cheerfulness into a man; it did not injure him physically, and morally it improved him, as he worked the better for it. It would be very easy to draw a long teetotal face in discussing this matter, but truth is the first of all principles, I fancy, and I should be false to the wish that governs me in writing these essays if, from an unwholesome desire to conciliate fanaticism, I should feign that the sailor, who is exposed to all weathers, whose life, by his divorce from all shore-going seductions when at sea, is as innocent, if not as holy, as a monk's, who is fed most abominably, and who is the only labourer in the world whose hirers expect him to toil for twenty-four hours in the day, has gained in any imaginable direction by his *tot* of rum being withheld, or in other words, by a mere act of parsimony on the part of his employers.

For what has the owner substituted for the harmless, old-fashioned, midday sip? The Act compels him to supply lime juice, but what does he give that to the sailor takes the place of the *tot* of grog? Dana, who took a deep and most honest interest in the temporal and

spiritual condition of sailors, says bitterly, but truly, that if the thimbleful of rum had been withdrawn on condition of something that might cost a little more being substituted for it, the owner would not have very greatly troubled himself to hinder Jack from going the old road. Formerly, after a hard fight aloft amid sleet and hail with the heavy canvas, after a long spell on deck in foul weather, after any unusual exertion by the sailors, it was customary for the master to order the steward to give all hands a glass of grog apiece. It helped the men; it rendered them more resolute in their work, it was a break in the weary monotony. But what does Jack get now? Enough, however, has been said on this?

A volume devoted to the origin and growth of customs, habits, amusements, and so forth at sea should, I think, if lightly and pleasantly written, prove an entertaining and instructive work. Many old practices have been tossed overboard by the modern sailor, and gone the way of most of the forecastle superstitions. With them has perished a number of opportunities for merry-making aboard. Take, for example, the ancient piece of horse-play that Jack in former times indulged in on crossing the equator. Maybe it is as well that this lathering, shaving, and ducking joke should be practically ended. Yet from the forecastle point of view it was good fun while it was current. It was a custom that endowed Jack with certain privileges, of which he made the most. As he grinned through his marine horse collar, he could ease his heart of many a truth respecting quarter-deck discipline and shipboard work generally, which he durst not utter at another time, unless he languished for the bilboes or had a mind to be spread-eagled.

These equinoctial sports may be traced deep into marine story. Careri in his "Voyage Round the World," under date of 1697, gives us a notion of the horse-play that was indulged in on board Spanish ships in his time. He says that a canopy was erected so as to form what he calls a court of *Senas* or Signs. Under this canopy or awning sailors, dressed up as a president and judges, seated themselves, "being clad," says the writer, "after a ridiculous manner." It is a pity he did not preserve the costumes; one would like to learn what Spanish sailors of the seventeenth century would think ridiculous in dress. The notion was that of a mock court. First the captain was brought before the judges, and we may guess that he was pretty smartly dealt with. Then followed the chief pilot, the under pilot, the master, mate, and other officers of the ship, and after they had been tried, the passengers were arraigned. "The clerk," says the author, "read every man's indictment, and then the judges passed sentence of death, which was immediately bought off with money, chocolate, sugar, biscuit, flesh, sweetmeats, wine, and the like. The best of it was, that he who did not pay immediately or give good security was laid on with a rope's end at the least sign given by the President Tarpaulin. I was told a passenger was once killed aboard a galleon by keel-hauling him, for no words of authority can check or persuade a whole ship's crew." These sports, it seems, lasted till night, after which the sailors divided the fines amongst themselves, had a brief carouse, and then returned to their duty.

It was also the custom of the Portuguese to indulge the sailors on crossing the line. A Capuchin missionary, in an account of a voyage to Congo in 1666, has a lively passage on the old practice. He informs us that those

persons on board who have never crossed the equator, were expected by the sailors to present them either with a piece of money or with something to eat or drink. "No man is excused," writes the father, "not even the Capuchins, of whom they take beads, *Agnus Dei*s or such like things, which they expose to sale; what they yield is given to say masses for the souls in purgatory." Any man refusing to pay his tax was carried before much such another court as that described by Careri. A seaman habited in a long robe sat in a chair and acted as judge, and the best or worst of it, perhaps, was that the sentence this fellow delivered was immediately executed. The usual judgment was that the culprit should be ducked in the sea. The father tells us how this was done: "The person condemned is tied fast with a rope, and the other end of it run through a pulley at the yard-arm, by which he is hoisted up and then let run amain three times under water; and there seldom fails to be one or other that gives the rest this diversion."

An odd sort of diversion this! Think of some pompous gentleman travelling to a colony, say, to take the governorship of it, declining to witness any joke in the sailors' frolic, and in consequence being strung aloft to the yard-arm and dipped thrice without mercy! Heavens! What a subject for leading articles in newspapers! Let us be thankful that Jack's humour has taken a fresh departure.

The Italians indulged in precisely the same kind of skylarking. Merolla tells us that it was the custom of the Italian sailors to fine those who were crossing the equator for the first time, and if any man refused to pay, then, without regard to his title, dignity, or social position, he was seized, sent aloft in a trice, and merci-

lessly ducked. The same author assures us there was a church that was supported by these fines. The importation of Neptune, clothed in weeds and bearing a trident, hailing the ship and stepping over the bow, may be an English fancy. I am unable to trace it to any foreign source. Probably the English Jacks omitted from their practice of this custom, even in early times, the ferocious detail of the yard-arm. Yet even with us the equatorial ceremony, down to the comparatively refined times of the East Indiamen, was not without its brutalities. There was never very much point that I could see in smearing a man's face with a filthy frothing mixture, scraping it off with the half of an iron cask-hoop, leaving the face excoriated and bleeding, and then plunging the sufferer backwards into a tubful of water. Yet there was something exquisite in such jokes as this to the taste of our grandsires. Fielding and Smollet dwelt fondly on such humours. The tub of water is an arch stroke of wit, and down to Tom Cringle's time it was made much of, both ashore and at sea, with circumstances of rougher play even than the ducking attending it.

The sentiment of our times is opposed to practical jokes, and sailors are pretty well agreed with landmen on this matter. Time was, and not very long ago either, when Jack would invent some excruciating diversions for his own particular pleasure. An example of his merrymaking occurs in the following story. Amongst a certain ship's company were several practical jokers. One form their humour took was this. When the watch below were turned in, a humorist would jump down the fore-castle hatch with the end of a whip—that is to say, with the end of a line that was rove through a block made fast somewhere at the foremast head. If ever a

naked leg showed over the side of a bunk or a hammock, the joker would tenderly attach the line to it, lightly regain the deck, and give the signal to his fellow jokers, all of whom would tail on to the whip and run the unhappy dreamer aloft, there to dangle head down by one leg till his yells brought the mate thundering forward to know what the shindy was about. It happened one night that an old salt going below to light his pipe at the forecastle lamp, seated himself upon a chest to enjoy a few draws at his sooty bowl. Presently his chin fell upon his breast and he was sound asleep. Instantly one of the jokers dropped through the scuttle and made the line fast to the old sleeper's foot. But it happened that a grim old tar, who was a great friend of the sleeper, was lying in his bunk with one eye open, and no sooner had the joker crept on deck than this same old tar, with sailor-like promptitude, cast the line adrift from his mate's leg, and hitched it to the chest of the man who had just sneaked up above. Scarcely was this done when the chest was torn from its fastenings and flew up with a sound as of an explosion to the hatch, where it jammed. The jokers, supposing the fellow below was holding on like a vice, redoubled their efforts with such hearty good will that in a twinkling the chest was wrenched from the side of the hatch and was swept aloft, bursting as it soared, and down rained the contents, to the consternation of its owner and to the great joy of his humorous brothers.

But diversions of this kind are hardly entitled to a place in the catalogue of sailors' pleasures. What are the proverbial enjoyments of Jack at sea? To yarn, to growl, to smoke—our latter-day list, I fear, ends with this. The Saturday night carousal is dead and gone; there are indeed sweethearts and wives to pledge, but

there is nothing but the contents of the scuttle butt or the hook-pot of cold tea to drink their healths with. Sometimes on mail boats a good-natured passenger will solicit trifling subscriptions that the sailors may enjoy an hour or two of tomfoolery. Then we meet with a programme that is mildly diverting, quite harmless and free from coarse horse-play. The sports are various; a wheelbarrow race composed of men who travel round the deck on their hands, whilst their mates steer them by grasping and lifting their legs; a hopping match by fellows whose left or right foot is bound to the thigh; a race in sacks, and so forth. Jack may enter into this sort of thing for the sake of the prizes, but I doubt if he would soberly accept such diversions as sailors' pleasures. He has to come aft to begin with, and so he is at the wrong end of the ship. Then there are the captain and mates close at hand looking on and creating an atmosphere of restraint by their presence. The passengers will also prove repressive, though they may mean nothing but kindness and goodwill.

The mariner, to enjoy himself, must first of all keep forward. He is uneasy when abaft his customary surroundings. His rightful hour is the second dog watch, from six to eight, a steady wind blowing, the weather warm and the ship in parallels where there is a lingering of twilight after sundown. One special bit of sailors' pleasure I can recall, finding yet the memory of it fascinating with the richness, beauty, and tenderness of its marine colours.

There was a little Dane amongst our crew who danced a hornpipe inimitably well. Evening after evening when the trade wind was blowing, or when the ship lay motionless upon a burnished surface with the sun going down in glory upon the starboard beam, whilst

to port the heavens were darkening into violet, with a single star trembling upon the fair breast of the evening there, would this little Dane, attired in spotless white flowing trousers, a blue shirt with a collar lying wide open, small feet neatly shod, and a straw hat perched "on nine hairs," with a ribband streaming from it, take his stand upon the after part of the fore-castle over the boatswain's berth, almost abreast of the booms upon the longboat. He had little fiery eyes set in red circles, as though the skin was scorched by the heat of his flashing optics. His beard forked from his chin like the tail of a sea-bird, his complexion was of mahogany with weather. Another sailor, with a fiddle screwed into his neck, would perch himself upon the booms and strike up "Jack Robinson," and to it this wonderful little dancing Dane would fall. It was as pretty a nautical picture as the eye could love to dwell on. I still hear the strains of that fiddle mingling with the vibratory humming of the trade wind, blowing warm as a woman's breath in the rigging that looked high aloft like golden wire in the light of the setting sun; I see, as though it had all happened yesterday, the groups of sailors, variously clad as merchant seamen are, in many lounging postures, sucking at their pipes or gnawing upon the quids standing high in their cheeks, staring at the incomparable little dancer, some grinning their applause, some dissembling their admiration with a sour curl of the lip, whilst the seething wash of the bow wave floats tenderly through their cries of approval to the ear, and the noble ship glides silently onwards with a yearning of her white jibs to the infinite distance into which she is heading, and a proud swelling of fold upon fold—shining like yellow satin to the waning glory—each stately radiant fabric of spreading canvas lifting

to the little crown of skysail that hangs like a cloud against the dark, pure, beautiful blue of the ocean evening sky.

Of course, in speaking of sailors' pleasures, I must be understood as referring to their amusements at sea. What they do ashore has been described over and over again, not perhaps with invariable accuracy. Most of us are supposed to know a good deal about the sailors' lodging-house, the elderly landlord of an Hebraic cast of countenance, the prodigiously fat hostess, the gaudy, most unlovely, young ladies, the drinks and the drugs, the species of hospitality that the mariner himself illustrates by the phrase "Rise Jack, let John sit down," most delightfully expressive of Jack being "cleaned out," and of having, therefore, very promptly to make way for John. Those who esteem the sailor most love best to think of him afloat. There his social horizon is denoted by the bulwarks of his ship, and though his pleasures be almost dismal for their fewness, they are wholesome for all that. But, indeed, it is only the long voyage ship to which such a subject as I am here dealing with is applicable. There is too much precipitancy in steam to furnish any sort of old marine pleasure-making with a chance. There is no windlass end to lounge against, no spell of breathless stagnation broken by the voice of a sailor singing some homely tuneful song to his mates, whilst the tall and scarcely swaying ship glimmers out of the orange tint which the streak of rusty red in the west has faintly touched her with, into the liquid dusk of the star-laden enfolding night.

So, perhaps, as 'tis mostly steam nowadays, not to mention "Dutchmen," the sailor may have but little cause to complain after all that his stock of ocean-going pleasures should be limited to smoking, growling, and

yarning. For better fun than these things there is scarce time. If one is to think of Jack's diversions it must not be to the tune of the ceaseless pounding of the engines, nor to the teeth-chattering vibrations of the whirling propeller. They must be dwelt on in association with the swelling studding-sail or the foresail taut to its bowline, with the weather clew of the mainsail up, or with the yards fore and aft with the leeches lifting high above, with the race of white waters flashing in prisms from the coppered forefoot to the golden splendour of the sun, or with the glassy roasting surface brimming into the hot distant blueness, to sparkle out presently, when the shadow of the night is over all, to the soaring of the bland and radiant moon. These are conditions of the sea which linger yet, and the shipbuilders tell us that they are likely to last for some time longer, since the sailing vessel has by no means embarked upon her last voyage. Nevertheless the arrant materialism of the steam fiend's creed has entered like the iron of which ships are nowadays built into the spirit of the mercantile marine, and spite of the perpetuation of the studding-sail and of the voyage round the world by way of the Capes, Jack's pleasures afloat, the forecastle jinks and revelries, of which there are plenty of ancient mariners still living who can relate the diverting character, are very nearly as obsolete, almost wholly as much things of the past as the quarter galleries and the large stern windows of the line of battle ship, or the broad and roomy timber-built forecastles, in which the seaman used to hang up his bed, to mend his clothes, and to peer by the aid of the flame of the ship lamp into his allowance of molasses for cockroaches, or, worse still, a drowned rat.

JACK ACCORDING TO LANDSMEN.

To whom, it is worth asking, is the sailor indebted for what I may term his traditional portrait? That portrait has long ago been made familiar to us all by the sign-boards of innumerable public-houses, by the illustrators of nautical fiction and songs, by the theatrical actor of marine parts. The presentments take on the whole this form: A broad countenance of a smoky crimson complexion, wrinkled and knotted by weather, and liberally besprinkled with warts and what are known as grog-blossoms; in the centre of this amazing surface a pear-shaped nose of an irritable fiery tincture at the extremity, as though it had been recently visited by a swarm of enraged bees; a large and heavy mouth, nicely adapted by nature whether for the rim of a pewter pot or for the neck of a quart bottle; eyes of a colour rendered indistinguishable by filminess and a species of red congestion due partly to rum and partly to rheumatism; one eye perhaps a little bigger than another, but both of them exceedingly small all the same—hazy twinklers lying deep in their little holes, as though driven inwards by the gales of wind into which the owner had peered; a long broad body supported by a pair of legs arching outward so as to form a perfect oval; the whole dressed in an attire which looks to have been gathered from the

wardrobes of the waterman, the man-of-war's-man, and the merchantman.

The tradition is a fixed one; he must be a bold man who would dare to meddle with it. What would the public think of the likeness of a sailor that should represent him as tall, slender, well-made; a pale face with scarce a scar of weather visible in it; no hint of drink in his nose; intellectual eyes—large, glowing, full of sensibility; with nothing whatever in him to suggest his calling outside that easy grace of mien which follows long usage of the heaving deck of a ship? A portrait of this kind we may readily suppose would be ridiculed as an absurdity and resented as an imposition. Why? Not, I fear, because it would not be inexpressibly more truthful than the accepted caricature, but because it would be a direct contradiction of a tradition; the disturber of a superstition that has become a sort of article of faith amongst a people whose country they protest, and with justice, is the greatest maritime nation in the world.

I have met many seamen in my time, conversed, I may say, with hundreds upon hundreds of them, but I ransack my memory in vain for any approach amongst the most uncouth and grotesque specimens I ever encountered to the traditional portrait of the sailor. One must go to literature of course for the source of the fallacy. I am disposed to accept Smollett as the creator of the groggy burlesque fancy that passes current at this hour as the correct and faithful copy of the mariner. Fielding has indeed laid his colours on Jack with a trowel, as one observes in his "*Voyage to Lisbon*;" but the reference is incidental, the portrait is not laboured; the wretch who fell upon his knees to the great novelist is not a study as Parson Adams was, or Jonathan Wild, or Amelia. But Smollett's handiwork is a very deliberate

affair. His Trunnion, his Pipes, his Hatchway, and that odd creature that dresses himself in armour in "Sir Lancelot Greaves" are characters which express some of the novelist's most ambitious art. We put Fielding's shipmaster on one side as an accident, as a quite uncommon experience in short; but Smollett's men were his own, and succeeding times have accepted them as typical, as representatives indeed of the seafaring character.

One must turn to the dramatists for earlier examples of the sailor. *There* we meet with very little exaggeration. The actor may contribute this quality, but the fancies of the playwrights are without caricature. Take the mariners in the "Tempest," take them again in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Sea Voyage." Marine terms of the period are introduced in the directions which seem to indicate a certain amount of hoarse bawling on the part of the puppets. But the ludicrous grossness of the typical British seaman was to be Smollett's business. In "Love for Love" there is the character of a sailor that approaches somewhat in roughness and coarseness to Trunnion and Bowling (though let me hasten to say here that there are exquisite traits of nature in these portraits not to be found in Congreve's creation). But even Ben in the hands of a good actor will not show as Pipes and Hatchway do in the mirror that Smollett held up to marine life. Hear what Charles Lamb says in his essay on "Some of the Old Actors:"—"For what is Ben—the pleasant sailor which Bannister gives us, but a piece of satire—a creation of Congreve's fancy—a dreamy combination of all the accidents of a sailor's character—his contempt of money—his credulity to women. . . . We never think the worse of Ben for it or feel it as a stain upon his character."

Ben had no influence. No one would think of tracing the paternity of the hiccupping, swearing, lurching ruffian that stands in English literature as a faithful likeness of the English seaman to *him*. It is Smollett who must be held answerable for Caliban in flowing trousers, tarpaulin hat, and pigtail.

It is easy, I think, to see how it came about; the novelist had been to sea as a surgeon's mate, and his keen eye had brought much to his mind that was to prove useful literary ware afterwards. No doubt sailors were a mighty rough body of men in those days. They were incessantly drinking and singing and fighting; their life was one of extraordinary hardship, and went far to confirm and harden what was brutal amongst those of them who were by nature brutes. Smollett was not likely to make with his pen the best of a life that he abhorred with his whole soul. He approached the delineation of the sailor a little warily at first. His *Bowling* at least is a mild-mannered fellow alongside his *Trunnion*. The reception of his "*Roderick Random*" sailors determined him to thicken his pigments for the next batch. The world, who does not go to sea, thought it all very true and very good as well. Succeeding writers, instead of going to the 'tween decks and to the fore-castle for ideas, went to Smollett. In this manner the type was perpetuated for generations. Every writer would add something to his cribbings for himself, and render his sailor a contemporary by importation of the current usages and sea dialect into his page. The superstition lay too heavy upon the soul of the marine novelist to suffer him to break from it. Smollett's mariner sat like an old man of the sea upon the shoulders of the fictionist's imagination. Did not such men as Michael Scott, as Captain Marryat, as Chamier and Fenimore

Cooper know that the effigy for the most part that they were perpetuating was a preposterously false and monstrous idol, no more like the men that they had sailed with and commanded, fought with, larked with and drunk with, than the portrait of the Thirsty Tar on the signboard of the tavern so named is like the soberly clad plain merchant seaman who sits drinking his drop of beer and smoking his long clay pipe at the table of that public-house! I wish not to be misunderstood in speaking of such writers as Michael Scott and Marryat. Of these men my admiration of their genius is as fervent as that of the most ardent of their admirers. I merely intend to say that, great as these writers were, they wrote, both of them, knowing better, under a traditional influence, which I trace to Smollett.

But one day there rose up a man who, putting aside all the examples of fiction, suffering no other government in the conduct of his pen than that of truth, determined to describe the sailor as he knew him. He had made a voyage that extended over two years; his ship was a little brig; his port of embarkation Boston; his destination the then wild and lonely coast of California; the freight to be sought the very mean commodity of hides. His name was Richard Dana, and the book in which he related his experiences he called "Two Years before the Mast." Here was the truth; and what a revelation it was! No grog-coloured, one-eyed commodores, no caper-cutting midshipmen, no wild festivities o' Saturday nights, no thunderous, blunderous sea captains with copper noses and bawling voices, staggering with rum, copious in curses, absurdly employing the language of the sea to express the simplest ideas. But what instead? Jack as he was then, as he still is, as in my opinion he ever has been in all essential points of his nature and

calling ; a thinly clad fellow, ill-used for the most part, smothering curses in his gizzard but rarely whipping out with them above-board, leading the life of a dog, fed on rascally rations, working hard day and night for the wage that a crossing-sweeper would disdain ; yet with a strange dim light of romance suffusing his nature too ; a dim illumination—call it *poetic* if you will—whose radiance you will seek in vain in Smollett's men and their descendants.

If the British public took even a little interest in sailors and the sea, Dana's sketch would have effectually extinguished the tarry-breeched impostor that does duty for the real Jack in English literature. But though there is much talk amongst us of old Ocean ; though we have songs in plenty concerning the mariner and what he is supposed to do at sea and on shore, the landgoing amongst us, I fear, have little or no sympathy with the marine life ; they may relish representation of it in fiction and on the stage, but they have not the least knowledge of the truth. Hence the traditional absurdity is still current. It is not the Jack of Smollett, but the Jack of Dana who would be hooted at as a sham. You must paint with the old colours if you want people to look at your picture and admire it.

Time was when I would wonder that Douglas Jerrold, who had some knowledge of the sea, having gone as a boy to it, should have defied all artistic and instinctive perception in himself by the creation of such a scare-mouch, such a turnpike puppet, such an insufferably sham sailor as William in his play of "Black Ey'd Susan." Not a beggar lustily roaring out fragments of unmelodious song on the streets of London, masquerading as a nautical sufferer, but would pass with a sailor as a much truer tar than Jerrold's Sweet William. Yet

reflection has made me understand that the dramatist was well advised in colouring according to the traditional laws. He wrote for money and popularity; he would probably know that neither pit, gallery, stalls, nor even boxes, where such culture as was in the house might be looked for, would accept as possible any sailor who could not claim a lineal descent from the Hatchways and Bowlings of the last century.

It is strange that the imposition should have been maintained and perpetuated by men who had lived with Jack, whether as blue-jackets or merchantmen, and who must have been keenly sensible of the monstrous extravagances of these portraits, which readers grinned at as incomparably accurate marine studies. Take for instance Michael Scott, whose "*Cruise of the Midge*" and "*Tom Cringle's Log*" rank high amongst the first sea books in the language. He discovers an exquisite taste, an eye of admirable artistic sagacity when he deals with the glories and wonders of the ocean, with the glowing scenery of the Antilles, with the majesty of the full-rigged battle-ship. Some of his touches are delicate miracles of imagination; yet when he comes to the sailor, whom he knew as intimately as the Cuban coast or the streets of Kingston, he goes to work with Smollett's brush. You admire the talent exhibited in the grotesque tracings, you laugh at the tomfoolery of the names given, at the horse-play and nautical airs and capers of the marionettes; but as a sailor you cannot for an instant accept the portraits as real. They leave the same sort of impression on the mind that is made by Cruikshank's drawings of the mariner. The artist crushes the quality of suggestion which he labours to endow his conceptions with, by the weight of the absurdities he heaps upon them. Skill is neutralized by

an obligation of inartistic superstition. It is nature if you will, but hideously distorted and no longer recognizable as a verity. It is like looking at your face in a polished silver spoon. Lieutenant Sprawl, in the "Cruise of the *Midge*," is an example of what I mean. A man might have sailed the seas ever since the day of Noah without encountering such a two-legged prodigy. The author is not satisfied to represent him as unnaturally, impossibly hideous in face and figure. He must needs clap upon this unhappy naval officer the attire of a scarecrow. In the same admirable novel there is a sketch of a shipmaster, one Tooraloo—captain of the *Moonbeam*. Here was an opportunity for a piece of subdued colouring; the skipper of a small West Indian brig in the days of Michael Scott—who, by the way, can scarcely dissemble his contempt when he speaks of the Merchant Service—was hardly a person that the romancist would choose to cut a conspicuous figure in his pages. But Captain Tobias Tooraloo was a sailor, and therefore not to be submitted on any consideration whatever without the broad traditional black-and-white daubing. There is no room for extracts here; for justification of my criticism I can only send readers to the book I refer to.

Fenimore Cooper is another writer who had used the sea in his youth, and had made sailors the study of his later days. He is subsequent to Michael Scott and deals more gingerly with his pigments. Time perhaps was beginning to correct something of the old tradition, and then again the Trunnions and Bowlings would have no counterparts in the American navy. Cooper has bequeathed us one true book of the sea in his "Ned Myers;" as genuine a work in its way as Dana's or any one of Melville's; and yet, though this author has given

us many correct portraits of seamen, unexaggerated representations of the sailor, the only creation of his in this way that survives in memory, that is quoted and spoken of with a sort of admiration, is Long Tom Coffin in "The Pilot," as consummate a travesty of the nautical character as anything to be found in boys' books about pirates, or, to look lower yet, in the nautical drama !

Thus we see that the landgoing world will not suffer the truth when the sea is written about. The sailor must be a drunken, pimpled, flowing-breeched, pig-tailed, tobacco-chewing son of a swab, a wild blasphemer, coarse to every sense as is shark's flesh to the palate, a prodigy of valour, a bottle of rum in his hand, his arm round the waist of some unutterably low wench, fighting with a harpoon *à la* Tom Coffin, firing off patararoes ashore in the manner of Trunnion, dancing drunkenly on the forecastle-head in accordance with the visions of Dibdin ; all this—and how much more ?—the sailor must be ; or else away with him as an impostor !

It is strange to think of such a monstrosity side by side with the placid words of an old sea captain who followed the sea for above fifty years, who probably had never looked into a work of fiction in his life, and who wrote without any other ambition than truth. "When," he says, "the mind has got a right bias, a seafaring life is favourable to a religious growth ; the ancients thought so when they said 'If a man would learn to pray let him go to sea,' and from what the Psalmist says on the subject it is evident he thought 'going down to the sea in ships, occupying business on the waters and seeing the wonders of the Lord on the great deep' were likely means to excite in the mind prayer for protection and praise for deliverance. I have thought much on the subject, and give it as my opinion that if seamen had

the same labour bestowed on them that is on landsmen they would as much exceed them in reverential awe of the Almighty as they now do in generosity and humanity." One finds it hard to persuade one's self that the makers of this country, the magnificently intrepid defenders of these realms, the incomparable seamen to whose courage we owe it that the honour of the flag remains unsullied whilst it continues to fly the highest at the world's masthead, were the generations of sheer brutes which the romancist and the lyrist would have us believe. In our own day, perhaps, there is a deforming feature which Jack's well wishers will have observed with regret. I mean the importation into the British sailor's character of a variety of Yankee graces. It is a pity that the young sailor of our times will not remain satisfied with his own nationality. I have always had a high admiration for the nimbleness, alertness, and seamanship of the American sailor; but I confess that quality in him which his countrymen call smartness, which has nothing whatever to do with his calling, but which is entirely a matter of the tongue, I have long and steadfastly detested. Let a Dutchman be a Dutchman all the days of his life; but what is the meaning of the seafarer's delight in American slang and oaths? Why should our youthful seamen—and the taste is chiefly to be found among the young, I think—imagine themselves short of the true stature of men until they have thoroughly Americanized their minds, their humours, and even their articulation? It is impossible to read a letter or a book in these times, written by a sailor, without being disgusted by the Yankee smartness, cocksureness, and pertness of the writer. One finds the transatlantic influence in the cabin as well as in the forecabin. Let us flatter ourselves, if we will, that we

are a very superior race to the old Jacks; but let us at all events invent for ourselves, if we seek new modes of speech; and in that fashion, if in no other, justify our pretensions. The marine caricature does the sailor no honour, but there can be little doubt that he is in a large degree responsible for the creation and perpetuation of the nautical Frankenstein that reels drunkenly through the literature, poetry, and drama of the ages.

I was lately reading Charles Reade's "Love me little, Love me long," a story abounding in many of the best qualities of this admirable writer. His hero is one David Dodd, the mate of an Indiaman. By Reade's correspondence, published after his death, it was seen that though he took a great interest in the sea life, he was extremely ignorant of it, and was wont to apply to a relative of his, a brother, I think, who was a sailor, for information. David Dodd is a stage mariner, an impossibility in life; yet it is not at all improbable that in the creation of this character Charles Reade was less influenced by the sea books he had read than by a certain type of smart sailors whom he had conversed with. David Dodd is nauticalism run mad. He cannot open his lips without giving his words a professional turn. If he is sitting in the society of ladies and his eye falls upon the clock he does not rise with the remark "that it is time to go," but "that it is eight bells and time to turn in." He does not speak of pacing a floor, but of "walking the quarter-deck." He will not say "I must stop," but "I must belay." In his conversation he is egregiously shoppish or nothing. He fascinates young ladies with long stories about icebergs, whaling, and the like; talks of harpooning a big fish that towed a vessel of four hundred tons with the *foresail*, *mizzen*, and *jib* all *aback*!

This sort of thing is as completely caricature in its way as anything in Michael Scott, in Dibdin, in the sketches of Cruikshank or Rowlandson, or in the pages of Smollett. The novelist's idea was no doubt that a sailor is no sailor unless he talks as a sailor. This may be so; but, then, how does a sailor talk? My own experience is that when a man comes ashore from a long voyage, his anxiety is intellectually to strike as deep inland as he can possibly go. It is true that a youth fresh from the sea may excite and alarm his mother and grandmother by accounts of hairbreadth escapes and the wonders he has witnessed, but the novelty soon wears off like the gilt from his jacket buttons. It is noteworthy that America, whose influence upon young British sailors is tending, in my humble judgment, to render them greater caricatures as seamen than was ever achieved by the pen or pencil of the satirist, is the one country whose nautical writers appear to take a common-sense view of the marine calling, to deal with the vocation as it is and has been, and to reproduce mercantile Jack in his plain integrity of Scotch cap, dugaree breeches, and various manners. In proof of this I would refer the reader to the inimitable works of Herman Melville, books as unexaggerated as Dana's, though the author might claim as a romancist a larger license than the mere annalist permitted himself. The day may arrive when this great maritime nation will be willing to forego its old purple-faced dummy for the reality, and to set up an image of Jack that should be true to nature. As the source of a fresh current of traditional inspiration, an accurate copy of the British mariner could not but prove highly acceptable. The "Yeo-heave-ho's!" and the "Shiver my timbers!" and the "Smite my eyes!" would be silenced for ever; the

rolling and reeling stage figure in flowing breeches and hat on nine hairs would lurch out of sight never to reappear; best of all, there would come to the public intelligence a clearer conception of the sailor as he actually is. But for the present, at all events, I fear we must go on tolerating the existence of the cursing and rubicund sham that has been suffered to represent the whole race of British sailors from the days of Smollett down to the latest nautical drama.

SAILORS' STORIES.

JAMES I., in Selden's "Table Talk," esteems old friends for the reason he values old slippers—because they are easily put on and off. Perhaps sailors' love of old stories may be traced to their delight in ease, to their proverbial disposition of careless enjoyment. At all events it is certain that Jack never seems to grow weary of his yarns. I have seen old sea captains and elderly forecastle hands turn purple in the face and roar out hurricane notes of laughter over tales which I never for a moment doubted they had themselves recited scores of times, and had listened to from others over and over again. It may be that the old yarn, like the old slipper, sits easily. There is no intellectual pinch about it. It slides from the tongue with the ease of a worn glove from the hand. The forecastle twister is handed on by the Jacks as a sort of marine heirloom. There must be some magic in it unknown to shore stories to excite laughter—some quality that the land-going tale is empty of.

If an anecdote is told to you ashore once it must be incomparably good indeed to render a second edition of it enduring. The Americans call these twice-told tales "chestnuts," and they show their wisdom as a story-loving nation in rigorously prescribing a period to the life of a yarn. But at sea a new story is eyed askance,

How long has it been afloat, Jack wants to know? How many times has it rounded the Cape? What sort of weather has it encountered in its day? and what kind of craft is it mostly to be found aboard of? Anecdotes of sailors compiled for the entertainment of landmen are for the most part vehemently scorned by the fore-castle as lubberly, inaccurate attempts, wanting the true hall-mark which the marine eye instantly seeks and will find if it be there. Indeed, Jack is as choise in his taste for stories as he is in his fancy for songs. One would think that his ship must resound with nothing but the strains and words of compositions dedicated to his calling by ocean-loving bards and freshwater musicians, who deal with the delights of the roving career of the sailor from the secure ambush of Clapham or the inland heights of Primrose Hill. But the sailor will not sing these songs. The music may be very good, but it does not take his ear. The lines may teem with nautical expressions, but he will have none of them. It is this odd fastidious taste in him, perhaps, that makes him keep a stout hold of the ditties which have been sung for generations; of which, as of his aged yarns, he never seems to grow weary, whose melodies he will send shorewards in tempestuous choruses when breaking out the anchor; whose words, often quite meaningless, will put the spirit of twenty men into his arms, legs, and heart, as he winds monotonously round the capstan, or pulls and hauls upon the topsail halliards.

But to revert to his stories. I have been endeavouring to recall some examples of them—yarns which were current in my time, and which no doubt still survive. One of these I will call “Jack’s Wishes.” Sailors will know these tales, but I am not afraid that they will not be delighted with them for that reason.

Jack had just arrived in Liverpool, and was stepping ashore, clinking the few dollars he had been paid off with in his pocket. As he was making a straight course for the Three Thirsty Tars, he observed an old woman standing on the pavement waiting to cross the street, that was tolerably crowded with vehicles. She was much agitated and flurried, making little hasty, half-hearted bobs forward, then recoiling with a short old squeal. Jack, taking pity on her, approached, knocking his forehead as a salute, and offered to pilot her to over the way. She thanked him in a cracked voice, took his arm, and was safely landed on the other side of the road. He looked at her, meaning to say good-bye, but to his amazement discovered that the old witch had been transformed into a lovely young girl, with cherry cheeks, pouting lips and beautiful dark eyes. "Jack," says she, "I am a fairy, and have been forced, no matter by what agency, to roam about as a horrid old woman until I should meet with some one gallant and kind enough to compassionate decrepit age, and to act towards deformity with the chivalrous courtesy it would extend to youth and loveliness. It is proper that a sailor should be the first man to behave thus to me. In requital, I will gratify the three dearest wishes of your heart; so now, Jack, wish stoutly, and your desires shall be realized." Well, Jack's first wish was that he might kiss her. Nothing could have been more polite. The fairy was enchanted, and I dare say he might have had four wishes had he only thought of it. "Wish again, Jack," softly cried the blushing beauty, "remember, you have two wishes left." "Ay, ay," answered Jack, "but I'd sooner you should save 'em for poor folks who may want them. As for me, I've got all I require." With which, chinking his money afresh, with a preliminary

flourish of his hand to his head, the sailor marched away.

Now the point of this story lies in its power of appealing to the sympathies of listening salts. It is odd even if its hundredth recital be not received with a universal grin. It is, in short, an interpretation of the sailor's character, exhibiting him in a few words as a large-hearted, gay, and reckless creature. Jack "twigs" the compliment directly, and salutes it with a round of never-failing laughter.

Exceedingly old is that story of the man who, coming over a ship's side, asked a fellow who stood in the gangway if he was the mate. "No, sorr," he answered, "I'm the man that cooks the mate!" Possibly the tracing of this brief yarn would carry one into the dimness of medieval times, yet I'll venture to say that it is as fresh to Jack's taste now as at the day when it was first lighted on. He must be a sulky sailor indeed who would not grin to it with as hearty appreciation of its humour as if it were some brand new excellently good joke. More than one old woman figures in sailors' stories. There was a certain faithless Jack, who after courting his Nan thought better of it and "signed on" for a voyage round the world. Nan, on hearing the news, uttered a piercing cry, and lifting her lily-white hand to Heaven, prayed that the ship in which the false-hearted Jack sailed, might for ever be labouring day and night in a gale of wind. But Nan's mother was an old woman with a witch-like knowledge of sailors and their ways, and on hearing Nan's prayer, the hag cried out, "No, no, my dear. A gale of wind is what Jack would like. His ship, reefed down, will be snug. The sailors will have nothing to do but to turn in when their watch below comes round, spin yarns during their watch on

deck, and eat and drink. Pray rather that Jack may meet with nothing but light head-winds and plenty of rain, so that the captain and mates may wear him into skin and bone by boxhauling the yards about." Another story that never to my knowledge missed of lively appreciation, though it is as arrant a fossil of a yarn as the very flintiest that has come down to us, likewise relates to an old woman who was a witch. Jack was kind and pleased her, and she gave him three wishes. His first he delivered glibly enough. He wished that the whole of the ocean might be changed into rum. "Right!" cries the hag, "now wish a second time, Jack." He scratched his head, thought very hard, looked up at the sky and down at the earth, and then with an air of triumph bawled, "I've got it! I wish that all the islands in that there ocean of rum was formed of baccy." "Right!" cries the hag again, "now for your third wish, Jack." He continued scratching his head for a long while. "Well, then," says he at last, with the face of a man that gives up, "I wish that there was more rum."

To my mind the funniest part of stories of this kind is that they should continue to delight. I am moved not half so much by Jack's yarn itself as by the purple grins, the absolute convulsions of mirth which often accompany his delivery of it. One hardly needs a better illustration of the child-like nature of the salt. Observe how old stories please the children. The sailor has his marine nursery stories, his Jack in the Beanstalk, his Goody Twoshoes, his Little Red Riding Hood, just as the youngsters upstairs have: and neither he any more than they will weary of these o'ertold tales, which remain as fresh at their thousandth recital as at the moment when their wonders and humours were first sprung upon the intelligence of their simple listeners.

Dana preserves a true sailor's story in his "Two Years before the Mast." His ship was from California, laden with hides. In the North Atlantic she spoke a brig bound for the Spanish Main and sent a boat for provisions. One of the boat's crew was a man named Joe, who was vain, and made the best show of everything. "The style and gentility of the ship and her crew," says Dana, "depend upon the length and character of her voyage. An India or China voyage is always *the thing*, and a voyage to the North West Coast (The Columbia River or Russian America) for furs is romantic and mysterious, and if it takes the ship round the world by way of the Islands and China it outranks them all. The grave slab-sided mate of the brig leaned over the rail and spoke to the men in the boat. 'Where are you from?' Joe answered up quick, 'From the North West Coast.' 'What's your cargo?' This was a poser; but Joe was ready with an equivoque. 'Skins,' said he. 'Here and there a *horn*?' asked the mate in the driest manner. The boat's crew laughed out and Joe's glory faded." This is very fine: one of the few nautical experiences which sailors will at once accept and enter in their marine Joe Miller without requiring that it shall be two or three centuries old. Dana preserves another story; this time an ancient one, but wonderfully good nevertheless, though its humour can only be appreciated by sailors. There was a mean little captain who sailed in a mean little brig. He was on a voyage from Liverpool when he fell in with a great homeward-bound Indiaman, with her studding-sails out on both sides, glittering uniforms on her quarter-deck, sunburnt men in wide brimmed hats on her castle, and paroquets in her rigging. The vanity of the mean little captain led him to speak her, and then his own insignificance made

him feel so awestruck that he seemed to quail. He called out in a small lisping voice, "What ship is that, pray?" The answer came back in a deep-toned roar through the trumpet, "The *Bashaw*, from Bombay to London. Hundred and ten days out. Where are you from?" "Only from Liverpool, sir," lisped the mean little captain in a voice full of apology and subservience. The humour, as Dana points out, can only be felt by those who know the ritual of hailing at sea. No one says *sir*, and the *only* is absurdly expressive.

Certain tragic stories darkly suggestive of the sailor's life are related in ship's forecastles. They are for the most part venerable, yet they keep a much tighter hold on the sailor's memory than a younger yarn could. Here, for instance, is a hideous traditional crimp story. The Yankees give it an English origin, but the English firmly root it in New York. Shortly before the ship sailed, four new men were handed over the side by the crimps. They were all of them dead drunk, and were rolled below and stowed away that they might sleep the fumes of the liquor out of their brains. Three of them arrived on deck in due course, but the fourth man remained in his bunk in the same posture in which he had been placed there by the crimp. The sailors thought he was in a trance; the mate accepted their view; no one interfered with the creature or indeed approached him where he lay in his bunk, right forward in the fore-castle in the very "eyes" of the ship almost. On the second night the Jacks took notice of an unpleasant smell. The vessel had been smoked to extirpate the vermin that overran her, and the salts viewed the evil odour as emanating from some dead rats. "'Taint no rats," exclaimed a sailor, crossing over to the bunk in which the drunken man lay. "Here's the cause of this

hatmosphere, bullies;" and dragging forth the man's arm he added, "Dead as a wooden leg, mates." The men ran to look; one of them striking a light, held it close to the face of the corpse, when in an instant a greenish flame shot out of the grinning lips, and in a breath the whole body was a-crawl with twisting lambent fire. The sight was so horrible that most of the sailors fled. The mate thundered down the scuttle, demanding to know what the row there was about. "Come and look," was the answer. "My God!" he cried, on catching sight of the burning thing. An old mariner smothered the corpse in a blanket, and, helped by another, carried it on deck and swung it overboard. It was now understood that the miserable creature who had been shipped as a live man, *merely drunk*, had been dead some time when he was brought aboard; the crimp knew he was entering a corpse upon the ship's articles, and his object in doing this was to obtain the month's advance.

Old as this story is, I have not a shadow of a doubt as to its truth. It may be contemporaneous in age with the first crimp that ever flourished, and it is certainly worthy of the father of a race of the greatest scoundrels that the devil ever had the moulding of.

A livelier yarn is that of the little Irish hooker. A large American ship approaching Liverpool was hailed by one of these small chaps. "From America, ain't ye, my beautiful sailors?" sings out the Irishman in Melville's lively version of the story. "Stop and heave me a rope." The mate, imagining that he had something important to communicate, ordered the topsail yard to be laid aback and a rope thrown. Pat, catching hold of the line, kept hauling in upon it and coiling it down, crying, "Pay out, pay out, my honeys! Ah, but you're

noble fellows;" till at last the mate asked him why he did not come alongside, adding "haven't you enough rope yet?" "Shure and I have," replied the fisherman, "and it's time for Pat to cut and run." So saying, he severed the rope with his knife, sprang to the tiller, and bowled away from the ship, along with some fifteen or twenty fathoms of her rope in his bows.

A good many stories in Jack's Joe Miller concern the shark. But the old-fashioned shark story, I fancy, is fading out as a joke. Steam has put an end to the capture of this beast. No one talks of catching sharks on board a great ocean steamer thundering through it at fourteen knots in the hour; but in the old times of tacks and sheets, when passengers and crews were becalmed for days and days on the equatorial parallels, shark catching was the one diversion of the tedious detention. You looked over the taffrail into the deeply dark blue profound, oiled by the breathless stagnation of the atmosphere, and observed the flickering indigo shape of the sea monster floating motionless a few feet below the surface, with here and there at various distances beyond a wet flash from black dorsal fins forking up like the end of a scythe, to assure you that if the chap beneath was to be hooked, there was plenty more game yet to follow. Out of this sport, along with the terror and hate excited by the fish, grew scores of stories, bad, good, and middling; one or two of which, mainly because of their character of exaggeration, may amuse the reader. Here is an American twister according to the text of the lively William Davis—but I need not say that the story is pretty nearly as old as the British Navy.

The carpenter of a ship named the *Jolly Ananias*, died off Zanzibar. He was stitched up in the usual fashion,

and a grindstone lashed to his feet to prevent him from rising. The carpenter's son, a youngster who stood weeping at the gangway during the funeral, leaned over to gaze at his father as he clove the water ; but his foot slipped, and down he went almost at the moment in which the dead man fell. At that instant a great white shark swept round from the bows, and father and son went out of sight in him in a minute. The captain was about to harpoon the brute, but the mate advised him to hold his hand, lest he should hurt the boy ; so instead, they baited a hook, and presently the monster was lashing the quarter-deck. A few blows quieted him, when, to the amazement of the crew, they heard a sound as of cutting and hacking within, and then they distinguished the dead carpenter's voice exclaiming, " Now, push ahead, sonny, and hail the first craft you see." The half-naked boy emerged, followed by the grindstone, and then by the carpenter, whose story was that in his watch below, as he took his funeral to be, he awoke, dreaming that he was going through a threshing-machine, and found that something had torn his hammock and was digging into his back. He understood that he would be rapidly concocted if he did not present a counter-irritant ; so he offered the grindstone to the shark, which took off the keen edge of its appetite. Presently, to his astonishment, his son arrived. The boy held the stone to the cutting edges of the shark's digestion, whilst his father put an edge on the lad's sheath knife. Suddenly they felt the bump on deck, cut at once, and so delivered themselves !

There is another shark story even hoarier than this. The Americans claim it, but unfortunately it happens to be a little older than the Pilgrim Fathers. A ship fell in with a huge shark. The gigantic fish was attacked,

and after a furious encounter killed. When cut open a full-rigged brig with all her sails set was found in the monster's stomach, whilst the master and mate of the vessel sat below in the cabin quarrelling over the reckoning.

In the "Cruise of the *Midge*" Michael Scott has cleverly elaborated a very old shark yarn. Scott's version is much too long to quote, and, indeed, it is an anecdote that will not lose point by being related briefly. An English man-of-war was cruising down amongst the West India Islands, when she fell in with a ship, whose master on being boarded, represented her as the *Stormy Petrel*, bound for Kingston, Jamaica, from St. John's, New Brunswick, to which port he claimed to belong.

In those days no American or other foreign vessel was allowed to trade with our colonies. All imported goods had to be carried in British bottoms. The master of the *Stormy Petrel* looked amazingly like a Yankee, but the papers he produced satisfied the officer, though the register, as well as the manifest, looked surprisingly clean, the former being wrapped up in brown paper instead of carefully enclosed in the customary tin box of those days. However, the lieutenant returned to his ship, and the vessels proceeded on their course, both being bound to the same port. The same day they caught a shark aboard the corvette, in which they found a tin case, weighted with musket-balls, and containing a ship's manifest and register. The manifest answered word for word with the one the lieutenant had seen, and directly indicated the *Stormy Petrel* to be in reality the Yankee brig *Alconda*. Nothing was said aboard the corvette, but on their arrival the brig was seized and libelled in the Vice-Admiralty Court, to the amazement of her captain. The day of trial arrived; the court was

crowded, the captain and crew of the *Stormy Petrel* helping to swell the number. The skipper was cocksure of his case, and sat staring about him with an air of indignant triumph. The corvette's advocate rose. "I am now in a position," said he, "to save the court further trouble by proving that the *Stormy Petrel*, of St. John's, New Brunswick, is neither more nor less than the American brig *Alconda*, of and from New York." "Who the hell has peached?" yelled the Yankee, whilst his eyes seemed to start from their sockets. Here the advocate produced the tin box; on which Jonathan, according to Michael Scott, swung out of court, exclaiming, amidst showers of tobacco juice, "Pretty considerably d—d and cond—d, and all by a stinking sharkfish! If this ben't by G—— the most active and unnatural piece of cruelty may I be physicked all my natural days with hot oil and fish-hooks!"

There are many stories of this kind, some of them, I admit, exhibiting the graces of Yankee imagination, particularly in the direction of whaling yarns; as, for instance, in that old twister about a sailor who was swallowed by a leviathan, in whose stomach he dwelt long enough to grow used to the darkness there; so that when he was delivered he was able to swear to the amazed Jacks who cut him out that he had observed the word JONAH scored upon the walls of the whale's inside in several places; whence he did not doubt that the whale he had lodged in was the very identical creature that had entombed the prophet, who, to beguile the tedium of his imprisonment, had carved out his name, after the practice of most captives possessed of any implement they can scrape with. But the reader will have had enough of these stories. The samples adduced may suffice to furnish him with some idea of the kind of

yarns that keep their hold upon forecastle affection and memory. Of course it will not be supposed that Jack's Joe Miller is wholly made up of anecdotes and stories after the above pattern. But when one is perforce obliged to skip leaf after leaf of a work in no sense voluminous, for reasons which the free and easy life of the forecastle will render immediately obvious, even to the slowest apprehension, it is inevitable that the samples culled should not be uniformly brilliant nor plentiful, nor even entirely illustrative of Jack's notion of humour.

THE SAILOR'S PHILOSOPHY.

JACK's philosophy would best show to the public in such a portrait as we find in the Sam Weller of Charles Dickens. Pickwick's famous servant is an embodiment of the cockney sentiment and morality of the age in which he flourished. Dickens sought far and near for the odd things that he puts into Sam's mouth ; he goes to Goldsmith—even to Boswell, as one notices in Weller's story of the man who blew his brains out after consulting his doctor as to the number of muffins he was in a condition to eat. This story was told by Beauclerk to Johnson during a discussion between them on the murder of Lord Sandwich's mistress by Hackman. There is plenty of room for a marine Weller in fiction, only unhappily there is no maritime Dickens living just at present to endow such a creation with the qualities which give Sam his real vitality in Pickwick. Something more needs to go to the making of a character than the mere utterance of philosophic humours gathered from mouths in the market-place and the highway or droll stories a great deal older than Joe Miller.

There is indeed no very great depth in Jack's philosophy. Shipboard existence is much on the surface. The sea has an inner life, but its obscurest features to the landsman are but of a homely order after all, and the flash of a plain forecastle saying will light up a wide

area of maritime vocation. It is characteristic of the sailor that he should find little or nothing of romance or sentiment in his calling. Possibly this may come from an overstrained sense of manliness, from a stupid fear of ridicule, from a dislike of being thought capable of any sort of weakness. Many fine minds have gone to sea, but they have been roughened and darkened, so to speak, by the coarseness of associates whose influence, I am afraid, as that of a dominant faction, has resulted in that dead level of prose which is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of shipboard life, from the transom to the knightheads. A man, if he can help it, will never risk a laugh against himself at sea. He may receive from the glory of a sunset, from the splendour of a star, from the swelling fabric of spar and canvas, to whose impulse the structure upon which he stands shears the blue surge into snow, an inspiration that stirs him to the heart, that melts through and through him in some ennobling and heart-lifting emotion; but he dare not confess himself—he must turn a wooden face upon the wonders of the deep. Nothing must affect him but the dull prosaics of his calling, the behaviour of the captain and the mates, the quality of the beef and the pork, the general outlook of the voyage, with the money to be taken up at the end of it, and the jaunt ashore to follow.

One sees the influence of this theory of *manliness* in sea literature. There is no attempt to stand between Jack and his calling, and to prove to him by making him see with eyes he has never yet been taught to exercise, that the life of the deep is far fuller of romance, is far more rich in poetry, is grander with colour than that of any other vocation which can be named. Ocean literature is but little more than a grin from beginning

to end. It would seem, indeed, as though a man dare not be in earnest when he takes up his pen to write about the sea. There is the old skylarking, there is the old blasphemous indifference to those ties and claims which give to shore life pretty much all the sacredness it possesses. This literature would be bad enough if it were true; but then it is not true, and being false, it is a dishonour and a degradation to the seaman. But he has himself to thank for it. His resolution not to exhibit himself in any posture of mind that might suggest him as influenced by any but the humblest, I may say the basest, conditions of his profession, is a justification of the representations made of him. He, indeed, would be the first to laugh at any approach to a romantic colouring in the portrait of a sailor, however promptly he might secretly recognize the fidelity of the drawing. Every one will admit that there is no calling more manly than the sea; but its manliness has been carried a great deal too far. In truth, you shall observe how old salts understand this, in a hazy way indeed, when they fall foul of a youngster, fresh to the ocean, for over-sailorising his part by bad language, drink, and the swaggering, hectoring, reckless airs which a boy puts on as he would his jumper, as though he should be laughed at and thought a mere lubber without them. Jack's philosophy, therefore, it will be supposed, is of the plainest, and delivered with but little ambition of language. Considering his long career, his stock of maxims is not very abundant. What humour they possess is entirely salt, and can only appeal successfully to the maritime intelligence. His sphere is a narrow one; his vocational life is contained within the ship's bulwarks, his society is exceedingly limited, and it is only one in many who carries the faculty of observation

ashore with him and brings home from the distant countries he visits, memories and ideas which have no reference to the drinking shop, to the calaboose, or to the sixpenny theatre gallery.

The character of a nation is to be gathered from its proverbs, and a landsman may form a good idea of the sea life from the sayings of which many are still current in it. Of course, I shall be understood as speaking of the forecastle. The philosophy of that part of the ship may be summed up as a species of general "growl" against the quarter-deck, along with a strong sentiment of dislike of the calling. A sailor's notion of an idiot is a man who "sells a farm to go to sea." It is not indeed that Jack has any particular taste for farming as an occupation, but the farm suggests an inshore dwelling, a leafy retreat with green meadow lands, beautiful with buttercups and daisies round about, the scent of new milk in the air, eggs and bacon for breakfast, the sultry hum of bees, with honey for tea, and above all, the sea leagues out of sight and sound. Yet he is a little inconsistent. He derides a man who sells a farm to go to sea, but if there be a lubberly fellow amongst the ship's company, he will tell him that he hasn't "got the hayseed out of his hair." His dislike of the quarter-deck may be traced in many of his sayings. "I didn't come through the cabin windows." He means by this that though he has obtained promotion aft, he arrived at that part of the ship honourably through the forecastle; he didn't sneak into command by the thrust of some influential hand through the cabin window, but emerged honestly out of the slush-pot and made his way to the land of knives and forks and spoons through the various grades of boy, ordinary seaman, boatswain, and the like. So this quarter-deck hostility will be found manifested

in the employment of the word "sir." I remember once, when a midshipman, being forward, talking to one or two of the men. A voice hailed me; I thought it was the mate, and cried, "Sir?" "*Sir!*" thundered the seaman who had addressed me, "*Who's dog am I that ye call me 'Sir'?*"

Jack's love of growling, too, may also be found illustrated by his selection of the word *dog* in his sayings. "A live dog's better than a dead lion," he will grumble when, feeling poorly and low, he is "hazed" for his want of alacrity by the skipper or mate. "A sick dog's got no mess," is another of his expressions. "Give a dog a bad name and ye may as well chuck him overboard." "A sick dog's no man's cur." "He's a good dog that'll come when he's called, let alone before." There was, and still maybe, for all I know, a strong prejudice against soldiers amongst sailors. The origin of this must perhaps be sought in the old ship of war, where the combined functions of the marine rendered him for ages an object of ridicule to the pigtailed Jacks. To "sojer" was long proverbially expressive of skulking and loafing. "*Sojer*," says Dana, "is the worst term of reproach that can be applied to a sailor. It signifies a *skulk*, a *shirk*—one who is always trying to get clear of work, and is out of the way, or hanging back, when duty is to be done. 'Marine' is the term applied more particularly to a man who is ignorant and clumsy about seamen's work—a greenhorn, a landhorn. To make a sailor shoulder a handspike and walk fore and aft the deck, like a sentry, is as ignominious a punishment as can be put upon him. Such a punishment inflicted upon an able seaman in a vessel of war might break down his spirit more than a flogging." This prejudice I suspect has long since passed away, though it yet survives in

certain sayings, and may be perhaps cultivated here and there against the conscience as a point of *professional honour*.

Still, absurd as the thing seems, it does somehow or other go against the grain to see a soldier and a sailor fraternising together ashore, drinking together, smoking together, and going about as fast friends. There seems an inconsistency in it, though it might puzzle a man to express his reason for thinking so. The soldier has provided a text for many a fore-castle saying. "He's as hearty as the meat in a soldier's broth" is a familiar expression. There is no irony in this. Jack honestly means by it, that he considers soldiers are very much better fed than sailors, otherwise he might go to his own coppers instead of referring to the military stewpot for an image. Again, a man will say, speaking of severe weather, "It is cold enough to nip the shank off a soldier's button." This is a saying to puzzle the marine etymologist. In all probability it took its rise at a period when soldiers' buttons were remarkable for other qualities than that of showiness only. Another fore-castle phrase is, "He talks like a soldier's coat without sleeves." The meaning of this is tolerably plain. Jack intends to say that the conversation of the person he criticises is illogical, wanting completeness, conveying a mere torso of thought. It is odd, though, that he should go to the soldier's coat for the simile. Why not to the waiter's, or the alderman's, or the chimney-sweep's?

In some of the fore-castle expressions a hint of historic interest may be sometimes found to lurk, as, for instance, when it is said of the discipline or general appearance of a vessel, that everything was "shipshape and Bristol fashion." In olden days—nor is the time so very remote either, though in matters maritime we have learnt to

live very fast since then—"Bristol fashion" meant a very smart fashion indeed. Some of the smartest barques and brigs ever afloat traded from that port to the West Indies, and they were famous as the American clippers afterwards became, for the same reason, that is, for the seamanship of their people, the taste and elegance of their rig, and the man-of-war precision and liveliness which characterized their navigation. To those days belonged the imaginative pile of cloths swelling cloud-like one above another from the skysail to the moonsail, and on yet to the cloud-cleaner, the sky-scraper, the star-gazer, the angel's-footstool, the heaven-disturber, the comet-catcher, and the sun-shifter! Here and there one meets with a saying sanctified by a touch of rude poetry. In my time it used to be said of a ship heading north from Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope homeward bound, that "The first land that you make is the North Star." This is a fancy that has always struck me as instinct with oceanic grace. Another pretty expression is, "There she comes with a feather in her mouth," said of a ship bowling along with the water throbbing in cream all about her bows as she drives through it with a hurry of wet flashings from her sides, and her milk-white canvas yearning towards the sea-line as though the vessel knew that her home lay hidden behind the gleaming horizon far down in the airy blue dimness there. A rougher saying, with no discernible elegance in it at all is, "There she blows, boys; put another bit of beef in soak!" One will hear this said when in a fresh breeze, a sudden strong gust blows the ship down, bringing the froth to leeward close to the topgallant-rail, with a mighty roaring aloft, to which the quick, fierce cries of the officer of the watch communicate an element of excitement. It is not very easy

to trace the paternity of such an exclamation as this. It might arise from Jack's notion that, as it is coming on to blow, the ship will presently be made snug, when there will be nothing left for him to do, so that he may as well put another piece of beef in soak, for there will be leisure enough anon for him to enjoy it. More expressive as an illustration of bitter weather than the sailors' reference to the frozen button is Jack's phrase, "It is cold enough to freeze the top hank of a Greenlandman's jib." This is entirely Arctic as a fancy.

Some of the sailors' sayings are curiously quaint. A man will say of another, "He looks as if he'd been cast away on the top crust of a ha'penny loaf." One finds a very good portrait of human gauntness in such an image as this. I have seen more than one "pier-head jumper" shivering on a November day in thin dungaree, without so much as the proverbial "donkey's breakfast" to lie on, his head protected by an old Scotch cap that he has fished, after much toil, out of an adjacent dock, to whom this exclamation would be painfully applicable. Davy Jones does not bear a very large part in sailors' sayings. Maybe he is held in too much awe to be sworn by, or to be wantonly named. His "locker" is a big one, filled with green navies and the silent shapes of seamen. He is Jack's Poseidon, the embodied spirit of old Ocean; no idle travesty of the classic Neptune, but such a spirit as might correspond with Milton's magnificent conception of Death—

"What seem'd its head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

It is only at rare intervals that Jack will whip out with a phrase about him that lacks the reverence and awe his heart feels; as, for example, when the noise of an approaching squall was heard it would be said that, "Davy

Jones was boiling the coppers for the parsons——" for what purpose Jack's antipathy to anything clerical on board must explain. Also it is still customary to say when a breeze of wind is whitening the surface of the waters that "Davy Jones is showing his frilled shirt." There is a pleasant fancy in the saying when a ship is going along "all fluking," as it used to be called, making brisk headway and promising a speedy passage, that the "girls have got hold of the tow-rope." The notion of Poll, and Sukey, and Nan, and the rest of the pretty girls like to those who used to attend in flocks when a ship arrived at the East India Docks, dragging Jack home to their fond embrace by some airy cable woven of the fibres of an ardent imagination, must be exceedingly soothing and comforting to the forecastle at large.

Here and there one will meet with a sort of marine Wellerism. You ask a sailor, for instance, whether he does not think the weather has improved, and he answers, "Yes, it's like Pat's cold; the better the worse"—meaning that the change is very well to the eye, but that in reality it is no good. But Francis Bacon was long before him in this saying, when, in one of his essays, speaking of dancing, he says, "the better, the worse." There is another Wellerism in the exclamation, "It is a regular hurrah's nest; everything on top and nothing at bottom;" and, perhaps, also in this melancholy touch, "*To work hard, live hard, and die hard, and then go to hell after all would be hard indeed!*"

There are quaint sayings relating to small men and to weak-limbed lads. Of a little fellow it will be remarked, "He is no bigger than a spritsail sheet knot," or perhaps it will be, "He is as heavy as a paper of lampblack," or, more to the purpose yet, "He has not

strength enough to haul a sprat off a gridiron." There is another well-known expression, "He is working Tom Cox's traverse—three turns round the long boat, and a pull at the scuttle-butt." Through how many generations of sailors has this queer saying flourished, I wonder? It is applied to a loafer, to a man who skulks and hangs back from his work, and really means to walk leisurely three times round the long boat, and then take a drink at the cask in which the fresh water is kept on deck. The phrase may be accepted as a good example of forecastle irony, as though a man should say of another, "He is hard at work doing nothing." There is another satiric stroke in the saying, "I'll knock off the sea and go in a steamboat." This is a sarcasm as old as paddle-wheels. The phrase lingers, but I fancy the contempt it expresses has vanished. No doubt there are plenty of mariners yet living who cannot persuade themselves that a steamboat should ever be able to make a sailor of a man, so that in their opinion to go to sea in one is the same as abandoning the vocation. But in these days of rapid movement, of swift shiftings of crews, the ship's company of a steamer—I mean the men who sign as able and ordinary seamen aboard her—are in all probability fresh from a sailing vessel, and quite as capable of doing the work of a square rigger as of scrubbing the decks and polishing the brasswork and taking the helm of the fabric whose masts are poles, and whose canvas is shoulder of mutton sails. The rough philosophy of the sea is visible in many of Jack's sayings. A well-known axiom of his is, "Growl you may, but go you must." To growl, indeed, is the sailor's peculiar privilege, and no wise captain will ever dream of heeding a Jack's mutterings so long as he shows himself a smart seaman and does well the work

that is expected of him. In fact, it is a common saying at sea that the better the sailor the greater the growler. For my part I could scarce accept as the truth the portrait of a sailor unspiced by surliness. All seafarers know the growling salt who talks mutinously in the fore-castle whilst he sucks at his sooty pipe, who cannot speak of the master or the mates without a snarl in his voice, who never casts an eye at the mess-kid without a wrinkled nose, who peers sourly into his hook-pot as though in search, amid the dregs and lees of the twigs and leaves at the bottom of the evil-looking liquor, for some excuse to fall foul of the cook. Yet it is strange if this same man prove not the smartest helmsman aboard, the look-out upon whom the officers can most rely, the swiftest aloft, the nimblest at the lee or weather earing, the first to show the others the road if there be peril in the way.

The philosophy of shipboard discipline is revealed in such expressions as, "Obey orders, if you break owners." This saying is a pregnant one. Be the consequences what they will, your duty is to do what you are told. There must be no hesitation whilst you consider—no imaginable pause can be allowed for reflection—you are to *obey*, happen what will, and the better the seaman the better is this understood. The same sentiment may be found in the expression, "One for the ship and one for yourself," referring to a man's hands when he is aloft. He may hold on for the sake of his life, but he must work too, or it would be better for him to let go altogether and plump overboard. Here and there one meets with a sort of humour in fore-castle sayings, but I think for the most part that such merri-mment as may be found in them lies mainly in their irony. For instance, a dead calm will be called "an

Irishman's hurricane." The Spaniards are more expressive, perhaps, in speaking of a breathless spell of stagnation upon the water as "*a furious calm*." So rope-yarns, ends of lines, and such like raffle, exhibiting untidiness aloft, are called "Irish pennants." A sailor's phrase is nothing if it be not nautical. His very eulogiums must be as briny as his beef. "Every hair of him is a rope-yarn, every finger a fish-hook, and his blood's pure Stockhollum," he will exclaim, in admiration of a shipmate. So he will say of a captain or a mate whom he detests, "I'd weather him out if he was the devil himself," signifying that no matter how brutal the officer may be, Jack will stick to him and to the ship too, that he may not be defrauded of his wages by being forced to run. Again, "to pay a debt with the foretopsail," is the sailor's way of saying that a man sails from a place without settling his score. "To ride a man down like the main-tack." This is an enlarged rendering of the word *haze*. It signifies that an officer has his eye upon one of the ship's company, whom he may dislike or distrust, and that he intends to keep him hard at it whilst he is on deck. "To work his old iron up" means much the same thing. There are scores of other sayings, all bearing upon shipboard life in its various phases, such as "There's no peace south of the Line;" "Whilst she creaks she holds;" "Railway dough—a plum at every station;" "As independent as a wood-sawyer's clerk;" "No half-laughs and pursers grins," and the like. But enough has been said. Those who wish to know what Jack's philosophy is will find it in his proverbs and sayings. But it needs an apprenticeship to the sea to understand them. The sailor's meaning is darkened to the landsman's intelligence by the peculiarity of the words he uses, and by the strong

marine pigments he employs in colouring his view. Perhaps it is inevitable that much of the old spirit should have exhaled. The steam-engine has wrought a wonderful change in the ocean life, and a deal of the old philosophy that flourished lively and hearty amid the cockroaches of the slush-lighted fore-castle now lies pulverized and black in the bunkers. Yet so long as there are sailing ships afloat, many an old wise salt saw and modern maritime instance must remain current amongst seamen.

SAILORS' RIGHTS AND WRONGS.

LET us imagine that a gentleman requires a manservant. He is on the look out for a fellow who may promise by his appearance to answer his purpose. Some such a likely man he happens to encounter one day. He makes him the offer of the situation ; thirty pounds a year, let me say, along with bed and board and "the usual trimmings," as Mr. Mawker's friends would put it. The man accepts the berth without having seen the house, and in profound ignorance of the family, their habits, peculiarities, and requirements. On his arrival he discovers that his bedroom is a little hole of a place through whose ceiling the water falls in showers when the weather is wet ; also that he is to be fed very meanly and miserably on the cheapest and most inferior quality of tinned meat, whilst the bread, tea, butter, and other provisions, all of which are carefully and painfully doled out to him, are as bad as bad can be. The master scarcely addresses him without using profane words ; the mistress, who may be regarded as the master's chief mate, is a lady of middle age, whose temper has been acidulated by the worry of rearing a large impracticable family of coarse boys and hot-tempered girls, and this unpleasant person dedicates the greater portion of the day to keeping the unfortunate manservant hard at work. Now he might not complain of this, for he professed himself at the time

of being engaged as willing to do whatever he was asked in the shape of cleaning boots, silver, windows, and so on ; but he objects to sleeping in a damp bed ; he holds that his master has violated his compact with him in obliging him to lie under a leaky ceiling ; he is also of opinion that the victuals with which he is provided are unfit, not indeed for a manservant only, but for the dogs belonging to his master and mistress ; in which sentiment his master and his wife unquestionably concur, since they furnish the dogs with a table very superior to what they provide for the manservant.

Our miserable flunkey has not been many hours in the house before he makes up his mind to quit. He packs his box, carries it to the hall, and is in the act of passing with it on to the pavement, when his master, spying him through the window, rushes out bawling for a policeman. A constable arrives, and our manservant is given into custody for deserting the house. After a night spent in prison, perhaps, he is carried before a bench of magistrates, all of whom keep menservants, and whose sympathies, therefore, at the start are entirely with our flunkey's master. This master tells his tale ; John Thomas, with his knees smiting each other, tells *his* ; the master swears that what John Thomas calls a wet ceiling is nothing but an old stain, due to a leak that was long ago rectified. John Thomas, in the hope of disproving this statement, produces his nightshirt, which on being examined is found to be damp. He further proceeds to refer to the food ; he also pleads that the roof immediately over his head is so very defective that should a gale of wind arise when he is in bed, he stands to be killed by the fall of a chimney stack or by an avalanche of tiles. The master testifies to the roof being in good condition, and produces receipts from a builder

for work done. John Thomas is asked by the Bench if he will return to his duty, and he says "no!" because he is not strong enough to be starved, nor old enough to die of slates, and he feels too young just at present for rheumatic fever. Whereupon he is sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.

Now supposing this piece of fiction were real; supposing it were a substantial and familiar illustration of shore-going customs and habits. What, we may inquire, would happen? First of all, I should say if this practice of locking up menservants for abruptly quitting their situations were of old standing—say five years old—it is in the highest degree probable that by this time there would not be a flunkey left. The whole breed would have been extinguished. No respectable man—and none but respectable men are wanted—would be found willing to engage in a calling attended by a penalty in case of infringement of contract as severe as is imposed upon a man who beats his wife's head in with his hob-nail boots. But it is equally likely that before the race of John Thomases had vanished, there would have happened an era of riotous proceedings. Troops of gentlemen's gentlemen would have been heard of as storming the houses of the nobility and gentry, as crowding Trafalgar Square or the Park, and inflaming the outside public by incendiary speeches on the rights of footmen, the wrongs of coachmen, the claims of valets and the privileges of grooms—as *Men*.

But when you take a footman or a manservant of any degree, strip him of his plush breeches or swallow-tail coat, clap a sou'-wester on his head and thrust his legs into a pair of tarry trousers, you may lock him up for declining to eat your bad food, and to sleep in your wet bed, and to lie under a roof that menaces him with

sudden death, and there is no one to say a word about it. No! the law gives you this power over your hired sailor. You may have him dragged aboard your leaky ship, you may starve him upon such food that one meal of it would suffice to produce a strike amongst all the flunkies in the United Kingdom; by undermanning, by hasty stowage, by overloading, and very possibly by grossly defective workmanship and quality in fabric and appliance, steam or otherwise, you may menace his life; but if he has signed your articles and has agreed to sail with you, he must stick to his side of the bargain despite your violation of *your* side of it, or go to prison, unless indeed he can prove his case against you, which in ninety-five in every hundred cases he fails to do; not because he may not have the truth with him, but partly because his judges have no knowledge of the hidden life of the vocation, and partly because he is an unlettered man little qualified to submit facts.

I know not how this sailor's grievance may affect others. To me it seems about the hardest of all human wrongs that can be instanced. Let the reader put himself in fancy for a moment in the sailor's place. He is an Englishman; and he has been hanging about a shipping yard for days and days, witnessing with helpless indignation the selection of foreigners against his own claims upon his fellow-countrymen's attention; he is starving, and if he does not get a ship he may be found dead of famine in the gutter. An opportunity offers; he is called in and "signs on," let us say, for a steamer for a trip across the Atlantic in mid-winter. He does not know the vessel; he has never heard of her; but he is thankful to get a berth; and when the time comes he goes on board of her—not drunk; I will not assume *that*, for then he would be sailed away with and

perhaps made away with unconsciously to himself. He steps aboard sober, and as a sober man he takes an intelligent survey of the scene. First of all he observes that the ship is cruelly deep in the water. He ascertains that she has been loaded with such precipitation as to suggest a guilty mind, as though there were a criminality in the intention of her voyage that would be detected and hindered, unless the despatch was in the maddest sense of the word prompt. He observes that the burthen of the vessel is eleven hundred tons, and that the crew number six men in the fore-castle, promising three men and one officer to a watch, upon whom will devolve the work of steering, making or taking in sail, and keeping a look-out. Basing his conclusions upon experience, he decides that of these six men three are foreigners, who cannot speak a word of English, while at least two of the half-dozen are hopelessly incompetent as sailors. Now, though a mariner, he values his life, and he holds that a vessel thus manned and thus laden is as unseaworthy as though she had left dock taking in water as fast as her pump could eject it. But he dare not repent his bargain. He must elect either to stick to the ship or to go to jail as a deserter.

And yet owners complain that legislation has deprived them of all control over sailors! It is quite true that an insubordinate seaman may groundlessly procure the detention of the vessel and put the owner to a considerable loss. No doubt there are occasional instances of a crew combining out of sheer unsailorly malice and "cussedness" to refuse duty; but these examples are rare. A man obtains a ship with so much trouble in these days that he will not desert without good reason. Then, again, he may always securely count upon the penalty that the magistrates will inflict upon him. He

knows very well that whether the sailors be in the right or in the wrong, ninety per cent. of the men who quit their ships on the ground of overloading, or undermanning, or bad provisions are locked up. This consideration, supplementing the difficulty in finding employment, might well deter sailors from acting capriciously and recklessly in relation to their contracts. It does so, and the deterrent is so powerful that I am astonished magistrates do not bring more sympathy and closer heed to bear upon sailors' statements than is to be met with in their decisions.

Another of Jack's grievances is the crowding of his forecandle with foreigners. There is something very melancholy indeed in the spectacle of the English flag flying at the peaks and mastheads of ships whose crews, with but one or two exceptions, are Dutchmen; but our Jacks have made rather too much of this, I think, simply because it is a quite irremediable condition of things, and to go on haranguing about this question of foreign seamen is as idle as pitching cannon balls into an earth embankment. In this respect the shipowner merely floats with the current. Happy would it be, perhaps, if the Dutch invasion were limited to British forecandles; but the Teuton and the Scandinavian are everywhere; they wait upon you in hotels, they crowd the offices of the merchants, they build, they sew, they manufacture, they dig for us; they are rapidly becoming the butcher and baker and candlestick-maker of the nation. We pension them in the palace, and we legislate for them in the East-end. Jack is not the only sufferer. The shipowner is quite right in employing such labour as best answers his purposes. Why should we expect him to be more patriotic than the British licensed victualler, or merchant, or tailor? His business is to get a living out

of his ships; it is ridiculous to expect him to sacrifice his dividends that his vessels may be nurseries for a body of seamen whose services the nation may some day need. How the navy is to be recruited is a national matter; it has nothing whatever to do with charter-parties and rates of freight. No doubt as much in the interests of Jack as in the interests of these realms, many thoughtful men would be glad to see a re-enactment of that condition of the old Navigation Laws which regulated a ship's company by her tonnage, and rendered a proportion of British to so many foreign seamen as an obligation on the part of shipowners. But bitter as this grievance of "Dutchmen" is to the sailor, it is of a sort to defy remedial efforts. Legislation compelling the adoption of British labour would be tyrannous. It must not be forgotten, too, that the bulk of English captains and mates object to Englishmen in their ships, as a body of intractable men, less competent as seamen than the average foreigner, yet possessed of an enormous capacity for growling, along with a disposition to give as much trouble as possible. Possibly most of the commanders who thus deliver themselves declare against their own convictions, and merely to keep their owners' wishes in countenance. But this antagonistic voice, sounding out of his own number, so to speak, is heavily prejudicial to the English sailor's chance of re-establishing himself under his own flag.

Take the following as an example of the kind of accusations which are levelled by English shipmasters against English mariners. A captain says that he received instructions from his owners to ship a crew of British subjects for a voyage to Bilbao. On the arrival of the ship off Santander, the anchor was let go and a watch set. At three o'clock in the morning

a pilot came alongside, but there was no one on deck. He entered the cabin and called the master, who, walking to the forecastle, found the fellow that should have been on deck in his bed. On arrival at Santander he gave the crew money to purchase provisions, and next day two of them were so drunk that they were unfit for duty. They continued drunk next day and could not be turned to. On sailing from Santander in the middle of the night, three of the crew were hopelessly intoxicated, and the fireman on watch refused duty. Homeward bound in the Bristol Channel, a dark night, with a lot of shipping around, the look-out man was found fast asleep in the galley. The same man when at the wheel did not know what to do with it when he was told to put the helm hard a port. The writer sums up as follows: "I do not say that all British seamen are so untrustworthy, but I venture to say more than fifty per cent. are as bad as the crew to which I have referred. Then, let them do anything ever so bad, if you speak to them you receive nothing but impudence back. Is it any wonder a master prefers foreigners to our own countrymen when they conduct themselves in this manner?" No wonder; but surely it is not because one tooth aches that all the rest of the teeth in the jaws are decayed.

Grant a percentage of lazy, loafing, idle, worthless turnpike seamen amongst English sailors—not fifty per cent., no, nor yet perhaps ten per cent., thank Heaven!—but a percentage at all events. Are all your foreigners trustworthy? Do your Dutchman never give trouble? Is such a thing as one of these fellows being shipped without knowing the difference between a deadeye and a gin, useless at the wheel and aloft, fit only for the kicking he will receive and that ends in his breeding disaf-

fection—is such a thing as this unheard of? Depend upon it, it is more a question of wages and provisions than of the sailor's qualifications. If the services of the English seamen were as cheap to hire, and his appetite as easily satisfied as the Dutchman's, little doubt but that he would be very well esteemed by owners and captains. It is preposterous to suppose that English seamen should have depreciated in usefulness, principles and character to the extent represented in the comparatively brief time during which the cry has been raised.

Such a nation of seafarers as ours cannot surely tumble to pieces in a few years. The reputation of the British mariner has suffered, not because of his professional inferiority to his sires, but because of the stress of competition; dulness in trade, slenderness of earning powers, and twenty other obligations which compel owners to pare to the quick. Hotel keepers will tell you that foreign waiters are better than English; they are cheaper—that is why they are better. But since it will not do to admit an economical motive, we must attack character, and protest with a shrug of the shoulders that it is quite impossible to employ our fellow-countrymen; they drink so, you know, and curse and swear, and are so very heedless and neglectful and so on, and so on. In short, they are a few shillings a week dearer than Fritz and Hans, and in *that* lies the immorality of our Roberts and our Jacks. Read the accounts of English heroism at sea; watch the lifeboat toiling into the gale, note the behaviour of crews putting off in violent weather to the rescue of men in mid-ocean upon sinking ships. The seeds of a thousand exquisite marine romances lie in a year of newspapers, buried in four and five line paragraphs. Maybe whilst we listen to the

charges brought against our sailors we are hardly sensible of their meaning, or surely the repeatedly uttered declaration that Jack has not only depreciated as a mariner, but is fast decaying as a man, would excite consternation enough to determine the country into a close inspection of his rights and wrongs, and owners' and captains' assurances concerning him; for I suppose we are all agreed that in the event of a naval war we shall require men to man our ships, and that should the conflict prove a long and stubborn one, it is quite conceivable the Admiralty's private resources in respect of the blue jacket are likely to give out, in which case all hopes will have to be fixed upon the red flag, as in the olden times, when the bounty had to be supplemented by the press-gang, and when our grandest victories were achieved by a breed of seamen who a little while before were heaving at the windlasses of the coasters or trimming the canvas of the South Spinners. The English sailor may yet live to witness this country heaping curses upon the heads of a generation of statesmen who in a prosperous time coldly suffered him to be gradually extinguished by the foreigner, who will employ the seamanship he acquired under our flag to fight us with.

There is a constant menace to the sailor's life in the headlong hurry of the times. Unfortunately, the majority of landsmen, when they read about ships and sailors think of those large ocean steamboats in which they have voyaged, and whose superficial routine is to a certain extent familiar to them. If all the vessels afloat were craft after the pattern of the Atlantic, Australian, and Indian liners, the sailors' list of grievances would be materially abridged, though there must yet remain a tolerably pregnant catalogue. But when we talk of the mariners' wrongs and rights, we have to think not of

the six thousand ton palatial fabric, with the freeboard of a galleon and equipped with every appliance for ensuring human safety that the art of the inventor can devise, but what is known as the ocean tramp, the cheaply built, under-powered metal waggon that is despatched to wash through whatever weather may befall, and the insurance upon which makes it all the same to the owner whether she delivers to consignees or upon the ooze at the bottom of the ocean. Figure a structure of this kind loading by night in the depth of winter. The work is hurried on by an overlooker; the freight is literally pitchforked into the hold; all in mad haste the deep and listed steamer is hauled into the basin by a gang of Dock labourers, that she may be in time for the midnight tide. Here she receives her crew, a drunken procession of shadows who stagger aboard and disappear. The gates are now opened, and the steamer proceeds on her voyage. Before she has fairly put the land out of sight she encounters a gale of wind. The red-hot haste in which she has been despatched finds her labouring in a high sea with hatches open, bunkers crowded with unstowed coal, bunker-lids and ventilation tops off, decks encumbered with "raffle," anchors adrift, the crew too drunk to turn out, and ominous assurances to the captain standing on the bridge and yelling to his unhappy officers who are flying about in their efforts to do the work of the intoxicated crew, that the cargo in the hold is shifting.

One asks how it is that vessels in such a trim as this are permitted to go to sea; but this is an age of shams in the marine at all events, due mainly to Parliamentary indifference to the claims of the merchant sailor. I heartily wish the Board of Trade Surveyors would exhibit the same intensity of purpose

in the performance of their duties which are to be found in the Custom Officers. So zealous are *these* worthies that they would kill a rat if they came across one in the notion that they might find an ounce of smuggled tobacco in it, or a dram or two of what they call perfumed spirits; and yet a Board of Trade Surveyor shall find nothing to challenge his attention in a ship whose defects may be as numerous as the nails which go to a coffin. This matter has been thus stated by an old hand. "On the day appointed arrives the surveyor: he comes on board, is met by the master or the overlooker, and generally the managing owner. He is conducted to the cabin or saloon, where champagne or other liquors suitable to their taste are abundantly spread and supplied, and then, when regaled, the survey commences. The chief officers are prepared with a neat display of hose, pump gear, etc., and with boats beautifully painted and covered with well-scrubbed canvas, and artistically laced all round, a corner of which is unlaced, and the surveyor looks in and pronounces her a fine boat. No thought is given to try her paint-covered qualities by putting her in the water and proving her floating capability. Oh no, that is quite unnecessary. A certificate of seaworthiness is given, and she proceeds on her never-returning voyage."

But the space at my disposal warns me to make an end. The subject is a wide one—wide as the sea that the sailor navigates, but difficult of interpretation to landsmen, to whom the language of the ocean is as unintelligible as though it were jargon. The fore-castle hand has always suffered for want of an exponent; he is as a rule without the education to enable him to submit the inner life of his calling to a public that would compassionate and help him if they understood him, while

those who take up the cudgel on his behalf, though full of goodwill and honest intention, perceive the truth but in part, blunder through their inability to clearly grasp the whole, and propose or procure enactments which are virtually worthless as safeguards or even as ameliorative impositions. But from our slumberous indifference, however, to the gradual if you will, but to the steady decay of the English merchant seaman, we are pretty sure some of these fine days to be rudely awakened. The text upon which our nautical senators are for ever founding their sermons will be abruptly changed. It will not be as it now is:—what is the strength of our navy in ships in comparison with the fleets of other nations; but what is the strength of our navy in men, and what provisions are we making for manning an armament whose floating proportions must be, as we are all insisting, as *Eclipse* was—first, and the rest nowhere. Shall we reckon upon mercenary help? If we have no better hope than that, we may as well make up our minds to haul our flag down.

SAILORS' PERILS.

It is not very long since I was coming up the Bay of Biscay in a large mail steamer homeward bound from the West Coast of Africa. It was blowing a strong gale of wind from the westward and a high Atlantic sea was running. I was leaning over the weather rail under the lee of a boat, watching the cliff-like liquid heights rolling at us out of the thickness of windy haze and spray, when I caught sight of a steamer a few points on the bow approaching us. She was schooner-rigged and very deep, with a topsail set to steady her, and I never in all my life saw any vessel make such frightful weather of it as she. Her burden, I dare say, was about one thousand five hundred tons. She never seemed to rise to the surge; every sea that took her looked to break and boil over her as though she were a half-tide rock instead of a buoyant fabric. Her masts with the band of topsail swayed like a fiddlestick in the hand of the conductor of an orchestra. There were moments when she looked to be sheer white smother to half the height of her funnel, out of which she would emerge with a rude wild sweep of her ugly frame, with the water flashing and roaring from over her side through her open rails in small Niagara-like falls. She was scarcely abreast of us when she clewed up her topsail. I looked for the figures of the men who would be handling the clewlines,

but could see nothing of them for the incessant smothering of the froth upon the decks, along with her swift disappearances behind the green foamed-ridged hills running betwixt her and us; yet there must have been human labour at work, for that topsail was not a thing to clew itself up. Maybe all the running gear of the steamer was led into some deckhouse, or perhaps down into the engine-room, or into some bulk-headed compartment where the sailors might pull and haul in dry clothes, knowing the ropes as people know plants by the labels attached to them, and waiting for the weather to moderate before going aloft to roll the canvas up. But I suspect, though I did not see a man of them, that the Jacks of that steamer had to get the sail in in the old-fashioned way, and as I watched the ocean tramp, with her disc close under her covering-board, washing and wallowing through it with the snow of the seas dazzling out upon her in the furious heaping, till you would have taken her to be the foot of some huge waterspout slowly forming—I say as I watched the inelegant, deep-laden metal structure making a very hell of the sea by her insane illustrations of the weight of the surge, my mind went to certain melancholy reflections concerning the heavy and numerous perils of the mariner's vocation.

At sea a trifle becomes a frightfully serious and dreadful matter in a breath. A sailor once told me that he was aboard a small coasting brig bound from Dover to a North Country port. One of the crew was a middle-aged seaman, who during his absence from home had received news of the death of an uncle, coupled with the announcement that five hundred pounds had been left to him. He was in high spirits, talked much of his wife and children, how he meant to give up the sea and start a little business ashore and the like. That night about

ten o'clock, in the first watch, the brig was run into by a steamer, whose stem sheared through her bow as a knife might slip into cheese. Only one of the brig's people was lost. This man was the poor fellow who had come into the five hundred pounds. He occupied a bunk right forward, and was turned in when the collision happened, and when the vessels parted and the men went with a light into the forecastle to see if anything could be done to save the brig, they found the body of the man in his bunk, cut clean in halves, the bed-place itself being prized right inboards, so that it stood out like two shelves, each bearing a half of the ghastly sight.

It was so in another collision case that I read of not long ago. Most of the watch below were abed in their deck-house. The ship was hit by another sailing vessel and foundered in a couple of minutes, taking all those men, some twenty of them, if I recollect aright, down with her as they lay, scarce awakened yet in their bunks. These are the incidents which give the sea career its bitter human significance. A thing happens in a minute. A man is standing alongside of you at work; he is full of talk, chatting away about his home, about the sailor's pleasure he means to take when he gets ashore, about his sweetheart, what he intends to do with the money he receives, and so forth. You look away from him, and when you turn to him again a moment or two after he is gone! There is a small white seething of water slipping past the ship's side, with a hat floating near it—nothing more. Those bubbles are your shipmate's last sighs. They are the cruel symbols of the hopes and dreams he was just now talking to you about. The cry is raised, the ship's way arrested, eager eyes scan the rolling surface, but to no purpose. Poor Jack is gone, and

gone with such completeness, with such an utterness of extinction, that a reflective mind will find in it something almost paralyzing in its way as a shock and a wonder and a mystery. Ashore there are no swift exits of this kind. If a man drops dead in your presence, his body remains; you can point to it and muse upon it. The corpse lingers as a substantial testimony to the reality of the person's death; then the interval between the death and the funeral gives one time, so to speak, to grow used to the loss. Though dead, yet he who has thus been called away is still with you, and he is with you even when he rests in the churchyard, for you can sit upon his tomb, you can read the inscription on the headstone, there is the sense of *presence*. But at sea, death is utter. It is like searching the blue heavens for a sight of the man's soul up there, to seek in thought for his body in that boundless universe of waters in which he has vanished.

It is pretended that the sea life in reality is not more perilous than the shore-going life. You are invited to consider the risks of the land, how you may be run over in the street, how you may be struck on the head by a falling tile, how in your passage along the pavement you may elbow a person who shall send you home to die in your bed of some malignant distemper; how you may meet with a cruel end in a railway collision, and so on, and so on. Well, life hangs by a thread ashore, I dare say; but if it is a thread on land, what is the tenuity of the filament that suspends existence on the ocean? In a collective sense, in the broad meaning of ship-board life all around, there may be no more dangers to dread at sea than ashore; but in the individual sense, in the sense, I mean, of the sailor's single life, the risks he encounters, the perils he has to meet, are incom-

parably in excess of any other vocation that can be named. The pitman's, for example, is a hazardous calling; but the list of his risks is a short one. On the other hand, the catalogue of dangers which enter as conditions into the life of the sailor is exactly as long as his duties are numerous. It is not because the seafarer is rendered thoughtless of or indifferent to his perils by usage that they are the less menacing and crowded. A sailor might laugh at a landsman for pointing to some regular and familiar duty as a dangerous one. He has grown so accustomed to such undertakings that he is incapable of appreciating the perils of them. If he loses his life in the performance it is an accident; but the fact remains that his death merely confirms the truth of the landsman's judgment.

I will take the prosaic and commonplace piece of shipboard work called "shortening sail." A man is asleep in his bunk when the door of his deck-house, or the scuttle of his forecabin, is thundered upon by a handspike, accompanied by the hurricane cry of "All hands." He springs from his bed half asleep, squeezes himself into a jacket, or whatever clothes he may choose to put on, and runs out. The night is as black as a wolf's throat, to employ De Quincey's forcible expression. It is blowing a gale of wind; the mate has been "holding on" with his topgallant-sails till the weather has stormed out of a squall into half a hurricane, and then all is consternation, and everything must be done in a hurry. The ship is on her beam ends, the white water racing furiously along her side to as high as the topgallant rail, and nothing to be seen but it. Halliards have been let go, sails are clewing up, there is a rattle and thundering of canvas aloft in the blackness, with a slatting of jibs and staysails, that makes the fabric

tremble to her heart as a house does when a heavy waggon speeds over the stony road in front. The uproar is increased by the shouts of the captain, the yells of the mate, and the hoarse bawling of the men as they drag upon the ropes. To a landsman coming from his bed below into the blindness of such a black howling night as this I have in my mind, the scene submitted—as much of it, I mean, as might be visible to him—would be one of horrible clamour and of inextricable confusion. A sailor of course would understand what it all means. If he has to feel about for the ropes he knows where to grope. But let me not be told that his ascent into the dusky mass of thunderous fabric reeling high in air, invisible from the deck, filled with the fierce sounds of a ceaseless cannonading, is without a particular peril to a man springing into the rigging still dazed with the slumbers he has been aroused from, because the duty to be performed is a simple, familiar, commonplace detail of sea-routine. A blow from the sail may beat him off the yard, and no one shall know that he is overboard or lying crushed and dead on deck until the work is over and the watch called. He has to devote both hands to the service of the ship, when if he had forty they would not be too many to hold on with in such a staggering, reeling, black, and roaring time. He may feel for the foot-rope, touch, and then miss it and drop. Not only should a sailor's fingers be fish-hooks; his feet should be grapnels, his elbows anchors, and his gums should grow boat-hooks instead of teeth. See a couple or three men, for instance, out away upon the jibboom, furling the jib; the ship pitching bows under at times, the water boiling to the forecastle head. I have noticed fellows thus occupied in a deep ship stop their work to hold on whilst they were plunged clean into a hill of green

water, from which they arose looking like soaked fleeces, valiantly pursuing their work with the heavy streaming sail as they soared high with the lifting spar, to pause afresh for a new plunge; and this sort of thing would go on until the canvas lay snug in the gaskets and the men came in off the boom, purple with the strangulation of the salt, though not sufficiently suffocated to be deemed unequal by the mate to running aloft to help reef a topsail or to assist in rolling up a course.

The bricklayer climbing tall ladders with a hod upon his back may risk his neck indeed; but then his scaffolding is a steady one; he walks a motionless platform; he has a broad base for his feet to tread, he always has daylight to help him, and in very dirty or in very bleak weather his work comes to a standstill. But Jack, spider-like, lives by feeling "along the line." He has to jockey a yard-arm that may be rolling to an angle of forty-five degrees. It may be cold beyond language, great pendants of ice hanging from all parts of the ship, shrouds and ratlines glazed into inexpressible slipperiness, the water freezing as it falls aboard, the canvas frozen to the inflexibility of sheet iron, the reef points of the tension of marline spikes, and every rope with the frost moving in its block like drawing teeth. But Jack must do the same work under such conditions as he would be put to with the sun shining right overhead, and the sea, like quicksilver, floating to the blue sky with the soft heave of the equinoctial swell. Think of a black night off Cape Horn in July, the latitude sixty degrees south, ice all round, and the upper topsails to be furled at midnight when the watch below come on deck. I have a right to speak of such experiences as these, for I have suffered them. Though the double topsail was in use in my time, the ships I voyaged in carried single

sails, the main a four-reefed concern; and I have seen this canvas, when the yard has been on the cap, bellying up over the heads of the men, spite of the clutch of its gear, till it had crowded the heads of the sailors under the yard, whence yells would be sent to the quarter-deck to "shake it out of her," with such a slatting to follow that one looked to see the topmast go overboard.

There are no kid gloves at sea; there are mits, but a man cannot work aloft with a covered hand. His mits must be dropped when he springs into the rigging, even though the South Pole should be close aboard. And in talking of the sailor's perils, it may be as well to combine with the thunderous sail that strives to smite the mariner from the yard, with the glazed foot-rope, with the reeling and giddy spar, with the fierce exertion that is often needful to collect the frozen canvas upon the yard—to combine, I say, with these features of the wintry part of his work the detail of frost-bitten fingers, of hands numbed into apparent lifelessness.

I remember once going to the rail one quiet day, north of the equator, and looking over the side, where a couple of men were painting on a short stage, so close to the water, that the platform on which they stood would be sometimes set awash by the light heave of the ship to the delicate undulations of the deep. One of them, seeing me looking, pointed with a grin, but without turning his head, with his thumb over his shoulder to the water, and there I saw lying, within a foot of the surface, the motionless bluish shape of an enormous shark. With what heart, I wonder, would a signboard painter, say, flourish his brush at the height of a ladder with a monstrous tiger standing at the foot of it ready, and certainly quite able, to engulf him with a bite or two if he should tumble?

Jack must be manly above all things, and his theory of manliness takes the character of an assumption of recklessness and indifference to what may betide which, in my humble judgment, is an insincerity in him. A man may be within an ace of losing his life at sea, but his notion of manliness will not suffer him to say a word about it. A well-known sea-writer tells us that he was once standing on the royal or topgallant-yard at work there. His job being ended, he turned leisurely to catch hold of the stay; but one foot was still on the yard when the tie parted, and down thundered the spar to the full tether of its slings. He was safe by his holding of the stay, but his heart beat fast. The delay of another moment must have dashed him headlong overboard or, worse still, to the deck; yet he adds that when he descended he never hinted by so much as a syllable at this narrow escape. He knew that a reference to it would meet with no sympathy, but, on the contrary, provoke derision as at a greenhorn's wonderment at a very common incident of the marine calling.

I do not say that the sailor is not wise in putting his sensibilities into armour and struggling to repress most of the natural emotions which rise in him. What he does must be done. He may falter, he may hang back indeed, but he forfeits his character as a sailor by so doing. Let the order be what it will, there must be no scratching of heads and a leisurely stare aloft to consider. Indeed, if Jack ever chose to indulge in the luxury of weighing a command before executing it, he would recoil from ten out of every twenty orders he receives. Even a posture of hesitation comes close to mutiny, though the deliberating sailor may be saying to himself, "If I do it I am certain to break my neck or be drowned." I recollect some years ago that a number

of seamen were brought before the magistrates at Newcastle-on-Tyne, charged with mutiny, and were punished for their behaviour by several terms of imprisonment. They had been ordered to scrape the spanker-gaff, and had refused on the ground that the job was a dangerous one, and that they might lose their lives if they ventured it. The point involved in a matter of this kind is a curious one. I have often spoken since to sailors, old and young, masters, mates and foremast hands about this gaff-scraping business, and some have ridiculed the notion of its being a perilous duty, whilst others have protested that they would rather go to prison for ten years than undertake it. Supposing any one of the men who refused to scrape the spar had been forced aloft by some of those old acts of compulsion which were formerly practised, and having jockeyed the gaff had fallen from it and been killed? Should not one say that his captain had proved his murderer? It was a sort of work not absolutely essential, and yet it was necessary that it should be done, too. The humane shipmaster will hold that no captain is justified in putting sailors to a duty which he would not adventure himself. But this is scarcely reasonable, for a master may be a man advanced in years who has lost his old elasticity and monkey-like capacity in the rigging, and he might have all the necessary courage without possessing the requisite strength and nimbleness.

Perhaps masters and mates would do well to consider that timidity aloft is nearly always constitutional. A young fellow may hang back, not because he would not give all that he is worth to take the shrouds with the alert easy indifference that characterises the laying out and climbing of the experienced hand, but because, knowing the capacity of his nervous system more accu-

ately than the master or mate could guess at it, he feels certain that on attaining a given height he will turn giddy, perhaps swoon, or in any case be so served by his head as to be practically useless long before he may have reached the indicated altitude. People of this kind, you will say, should not go to sea; but I am not so sure. I have heard old seamen, sailors as smart as any that ever trod a ship's deck, I have heard such men declare that during many months when they were first going to sea, they suffered unspeakably from their nerves when up aloft. Youngsters have a claim upon a captain's tenderness in this matter. A lad should be suffered to feel his way aloft by degrees. It is a brutal act to drive a timid lad into the rigging, to urge him by threats to a job which is full of danger to him now, though with a little patience and kindly encouragement he might be the first presently to spring to it and to prove himself possessed in other ways of every valuable quality of the sailor. I am glad to believe that the typical coarse and brutal mate is dying out. Merchantmen have to thank this sort of ruffian, this wretched compound of the bully, the swearer, the sot, and the coward, for the contempt in which their red flag is held, not by Royal Navy men only, but by people ashore who read books and follow the newspaper reports.

That Jack goes in greater peril of his life than he did formerly, cannot, I think, be confidently asserted. Science has invented dangers for him unknown to his progenitors, but taking the life all round, the old list of perils must be said to be abridged. In some respects, undoubtedly, a man sailed the sea fifty years ago more securely than he does now. Ships were of timber, and when they foundered they went down leisurely, giving the sailor a chance to save his life. A vessel was plenti-

fully manned; the navigation laws imposed a handsome ship's company as an obligation upon the owner. The sailor then too was a good seaman, perhaps bred to his calling in the coasting trade, or in any case emerging into the condition of able seaman from the invigorating and informing experiences of a long apprenticeship. Plenty to a crew and good seamanship necessarily tended to promote safety at sea. Then, again, collision was rarely fateful in the sense we now find it. Ships' sides were protected by great channels which acted as fenders; their long, curiously steeved bowsprits and massive overhanging cutwaters proved substantial buffers when the craft sailed into one another. Also in shipwreck, a vessel left plenty behind her for sailors to lay hold of when she went down. There were hencecoops, spare booms, perhaps the old caboose, hatch covers, and a score of such matters washing about, whereas now when an iron ship sinks, she dies hugging all her property to her heart, and leaves nothing afloat but a few struggling drowning people. But then, since those times, since 1854, at all events, the law has quietly beckoned to the shipowner, and with long iron forefinger indicated many defects rectifiable apparently by nothing but statutes. In former days an emigrant ship would sail away from the Thames or the Mersey for America or the colonies with perhaps three hundred souls aboard, and only two boats—a long-boat on chocks abaft of the galley, full of livestock, and so secured as to be as much a part of the ship as the mainmast, with a second small boat stowed on top of her, bottom up. But though we have made some strides, we have a long way yet to walk. The Legislature need not trouble itself with the ocean mail steamer; rivalry and the half-yearly meeting of shareholders will always render *her* as safe as a seaborne

fabric can be made by plenty of boats, honest workmanship, hands enough to do the work, intelligent masters and mates. Jack's perils at sea will be very few in *her*. It is upon the cargo-boat, the long-voyage ship, the staggering ocean tramp, that those interested in the sailors' safety must keep their eyes. It is under this head that we must seek for the dangers which science has added to the long traditional list.

SAILORS' FOOD.

MUCH has been written about sailors' food; yet in my humble judgment the truth of this particular subject is less known to landsmen than that of any other feature of the sea vocation. A man, ignorant of the forecastle life, who should read a list of the provisions which are served out to the sailor in the course of a week, might reasonably conclude that when Jack sits down to dinner he has plenty of good things to eat. The landsman's eye travels over a catalogue of substantial dishes. He reads of bread, beef, pork, tinned meats, soup and bouilli, peas, preserved potatoes and vegetables, flour, rice, tea, coffee, sugar and molasses. He also hears of suet, pickles, marmalade, butter, raisins, oatmeal, and the like. He observes that these stores are liberally delivered, not in lean and half-starved ounces, but in good hearty pounds. He compares such food as an artisan on twenty-five shillings a week manages to obtain with the provisions supplied to mariners, and he arrives at the conclusion that when it is considered that in addition to a handsome table of beef, pork, pudding, and so forth, Jack is further supplied by his owners with a parlour to live in, a bed-place to sleep in, a lamp answering to candles or gas, a cook to dress his food for him and an excellent kitchen designed largely for his accommodation, not to mention a monthly wage of dollars to tassel the end of his hand-

kerchief with when his voyage ends, the sailor's lot must be, on the whole, a tolerably cheerful and, in some respects, even an enviable one.

Now, if the sailor's food tasted as good as it reads; if his beef, pork, bread, tea and so on answered even faintly to the notions we entertain of such things ashore, then no doubt he would have small reason to grumble over his rations. I heartily agree with "Tom Cringle" that a piece of virgin cold corned beef, tender as butter, sweet as a nut, along with a crisp sea biscuit and a rummer of fine old Jamaica, is a meal fit to hit the palate of the most fastidious monarch in Christendom. But taking the forecastle provisions all round—admitting here and there of exceptions to which I should only refer if I desired further confirmatory evidence—no one who has any acquaintance with the vocation of the sea will hesitate in declaring that the sailor is *the worst fed man in the world!*

I vow to Heaven that one of old Squeers' boys grubbing for a meal amidst a turnip field would be faring more sumptuously, making a more relishable, a more nourishing meal, than the mass of our merchant seamen sit down to when the kids come along smoking from the galley and the hungry fellows sharpen their sheath knives preparatory to falling to. Any sort of stuff, call it by what name you will, seems good enough to cask, to preserve, to tin for sailors' use. There are bakers who know how to make and cook good ships' biscuits, yet the large proportion of the sea bread that is sent afloat is so absolutely bad that dogs might well reject it. I once saw a sack of biscuit in a storeroom in a seaport. I inquired for whom it was intended, and was told that it was Trinity House biscuit, a sample of the bread supplied to the lightships. I broke one and ate

a portion of it, and never tasted anything sweeter and wholesomer. It ate short like good pie crust, was as crisp as the outside of a penny roll hot from the oven, and though hard, as all sea biscuit must be, was without that quality of flinty stubbornness which wears sailors' teeth down to the gums; so that you may know how long Jack has been at sea as you may tell the age of a horse by looking into his mouth.

By what preternatural instincts are owners governed in choosing purveyors and victuallers for the ships? Is the difference between the price of the biscuit, for example, such as the Brethren of the Trinity House feed their men on, and the price of such bread as fills the average forecastle "barge," so considerable as to make it "worth while" to quote the elegant expression of *Jairing's Waiter*? Or is it that the shipowner has something of Jack's amiable and reckless nature in him, so that he falls an easy prey to any plundering rogue who offers to line his lazarette with tierces and casks, jars, bags, and tins?

I remember that when I first went to sea I was one of ten midshipmen. We had to do the ship's work and subsist on the ship's provisions, for which handsome privileges ten weak fathers paid for the first voyage the very substantial premium of eighty guineas apiece for us ten young fools. The second year's premium was seventy, and the third sixty guineas. But in addition to these premiums we had, every silly lad of us, to contribute an additional ten guineas for what was called "mess-money" each voyage. There being ten of us, as I have said, we mustered a hundred guineas, a sum which, if expended with judgment, might have furnished us with a few comforts over and above the ship's pork and pease soup. The captain, I believe, benevolently

undertook to cater for us—it might have been the owner—I do not recollect; but what I do most distinctly remember is, that all we got for our hundred guineas consisted of a couple of casks of flour, one cask of most consumedly moist sugar (foot sugar I think they call it), a tin or two of preserved “spuds,” odious and insufferable to the smell, and a few pounds weight of currants for dumplings, which remained in our eye, for I never remember eating one. It is in this way that sailors are plundered; and the robbery is the same whether an owner exacts mess-money from the father of a silly boy enamoured of a uniform, and gives little or nothing for it, or whether he supplies the sailors who signed his ship’s articles in all honest faith in his good intentions, with stores so loathsome to the palate, so disgusting to the eye, so utterly innutritious, so very fit only for swift, merciless, and entire condemnation as to render the poor creatures who contrive to keep body and soul together on them, phenomena in their way, very much more astonishing than the most hair-stirring of spiritual manifestations.

Custom dies hard at sea. Marine prejudice is probably the most obstinate in the world. Otherwise one might think that ages ago there would have happened a change in men’s notions as to feeding sailors. They still sap the youth and manhood of ships’ companies even aboard ocean-going mail-steamers with the same sort of beef and pork that were desolating English and foreign ’tween decks one, two, and even three centuries ago with the scurvy and other scorbutic complaints. We point with justifiable pride to the engine-room; we watch with emotions of admiration and wonder the launch of a metal fabric of ten thousand tons, whose speed is to be fifteen nautical miles in the

hour, whose coal-carrying capacity is to enable her to traverse a space of two thousand leagues without a halt; we are ceaseless in our praise of the ingenious facilities of the donkey-engine, of the admirable mechanism of the steam winch; and we can find nothing to wonder at in the sight of the sailor sitting down to-day to the same loathsome mess of pease soup, to the same hunk of coarse, iron-hearted, tasteless beef; to the same pale, pimpled and measly-looking lump of pork, to the hook-pot full of the same black liquor, loaded with twigs and leaves, that he was regaled upon in days when Anson was making the passage of the Horn, and when Woodes Rogers was cruising in search of Spanish galleons!

Yet let me not be misunderstood. It has been reserved for the posterity of this country's history to starve our sailors upon food beyond the capacity of the human stomach to deal with, just as this particular age may lay claim to the honour and glory of having robbed the poor fellow of his daily tot of grog, marking the exploit with a countenance of pious concern in his spiritual and temporal welfare. If our sires gave their Jacks beef and pork and peas, they fed them with other matters besides, and pretty liberally too. The old Dutch custom was to furnish every man with cheese enough to last him for a whole voyage, along with plenty of biscuit, butter, vinegar, oatmeal, stockfish, peas, bacon, and the like. In Queen Elizabeth's time and later yet, as we know from Sir William Monson, the allowance was a pound of bread a day, a gallon of beer—a quart at every meal—a pound of beef or pork, with peas; on fish days, to every mess of four men, a side of salt fish, together with butter and cheese. The Spanish scale, according to the same author, consisted

of a pound and a half of bread, about a pound of fresh beef, a quart of wine a day, together with oil, rice, beans, and such things. It will be plain from this that we have made no move in the direction of sailors' dietary. On the contrary, there has been grave retrogression, not as regards quantity—no! we are fairly liberal—but quality. I am so convinced of the unfitness of much that is served out to sailors as human food, that were I a magistrate I should never be able to listen to a charge of insubordinacy or mutiny, based on the quality of the stores, without a strong bias in favour of the sailors, and a conviction that if they were not right in this particular case they must form a quite singular exception to what a lamentable parsimony or a criminal indifference has rendered a rule.

I heartily wish there was some sort of law in force that obliged the captain of a passenger vessel, sail or steam, to place upon his saloon-tables for one day only during the voyage—one day would suffice—exactly the same fare that his fore-castle hands subsist on whilst they are at sea. In this way the shore-going mind would very rapidly arrive at a clear perception of the quality of the stuff upon which are fed the men over whom flies the red ensign. I see—and I laugh at the imagination—the expression on the faces of the saloon passengers as they sit down to a breakfast composed of tea and biscuit, with a hint of molasses or butter somewhere about. But such tea! such biscuits! such butter! “Sometimes,” writes an American sailor of the tea supplied to the crew, “it tasted fishy, as if it was a decoction of Dutch herrings; and then it would taste very salt, as though some old horse or sea-beef had been boiled in it; and then again it would taste a sort of cheesy, as if the captain had sent his cheese-

parings forward; and yet another time it would have such a bad flavour I was almost ready to think some old stocking heels had been boiled in it." Imagine a beverage of this kind for breakfast! Figure the countenance of the saloon epicure as he thrusts his nose into the nauseous steam, vainly attempting to gather by the sense of smell the meaning that remained a black, turbid, and unsavoury secret to the organ of sight. And the biscuits! It might be "catch who catch can" with the contents of the bread-bag. I spent the early years of my life in as fine a fleet of sailing passenger ships as any at that time afloat, and I protest that a day would regularly and quickly come when a man durst not bite a piece of biscuit without hammering it hard to dislodge the worms, or soaking it in boiling tea to make sure that he would not swallow the weevils alive. Conceive some pot-bellied high-liver, some opulent first-class traveller, with a nose like a bottle of port, obliged to breakfast off a piece of biscuit which would stir from his hand like a centipede, so full might it be of wriggling tails, if he put it down upon the table to pick up his hookpot for a swig at its cheering and uninebriating contents!

And now, this being fore-castle Jack's breakfast—though eaten by him under very different surroundings; for there are no looking-glasses, nor waiters, nor damask tablecloths sparkling with glass or crystal in *his* parlour—we will wait until the captain makes eight bells and then go to dinner according to our imaginary Act of Parliament on Fore-castle Dishes. If it is beef day, then the nimble and smiling waiters enter bearing dishes of smoking junk, the steam of which instantly charges the atmosphere of the saloon with a disgusting smell of warm slush. I think I see the ladies holding their

smelling bottles or scented pocket-handkerchiefs to their noses, and one remains anxiously attentive to the inimitable expression of horror and hunger and loathing on the face of the old gentleman whose nose resembles a bottle of port wine. Sharp knives are brought, but the beef barely yields to their keen edges. The waiters should put saws upon the tables, or choppers. To what is this beef to be compared? To liken it to mahogany is stale; yet there are certain porous woods of vastly tenderer fibre than this same Jack's beef. Out of a cube of junk, when cold, you can easily manufacture a snuff-box, a work-box, a tobacco-box—what you will, in short, in the wood and toy line. Perhaps we are on board a liberal ship, in which case a dish of "preserved spuds" (potatoes) will be served up with each boiled bolt of dead and ancient horse. The "spuds" will not heighten the sweetness of the atmosphere, indeed they smell most foully, sit most nauseously upon the tongue, and must be swallowed with the sort of effort you put into taking a pill. But there is a forecastle pudding to follow, and here it comes! a dark, heavy, clammy mass of coarse flour, mixed with grease skimmed perhaps from the water in the cook's coppers, and boiled in a canvas bag. It is such a pudding as might even render an ostrich reluctant and contemplative. Do not let us doubt that there will be no imaginary passenger in our fictitious saloon who will not rise dinnerless from this theoretic statutory repast. There is yet a third meal, it is ironically called "supper." It is eaten at five or thereabouts, and consists of a hookpot of tea and biscuit.

Do I exaggerate in this account? Sailors shall bear me witness. I do not deny, as I have before said, that there are exceptions. Some owners give more attention to the provisioning of their ships than others.

But for the most part I should say that the stores put on board ships for the use of the crews are rather worse on the whole—hard as I find my own saying to believe in—than they were in my time. A copy of a seaman's journal was sent to me some time ago, and in it was printed a letter on this matter of sailors' food, that contained a sentence or two which, in the interest of seafarers, I will repeat. "It is a well-known fact," he says, "that owners of ships have for years past relinquished the duty, by law entailed upon them, of victualling their ships, and have handed over the finding and provisioning of the same to the master, who adopts the lowest price which the market can supply it at, thereby getting the vessel victualled with a most inferior sort of provisions, which are brought into the market solely to meet his demand. It is also well known that a great number of impecunious, hard, and greedy masters strive to make capital out of the very system of provisioning their vessels, or, in other words, farm their crews." We are told that there has been a good deal too much legislation in the direction of the sailors' grievances; but I think experience assures us that the shipowning community in general will do little or nothing in the shape of reform unless their interest be concerned in progress, and that they are only to be moved by measures and enactments.

The sailor is barely valued. He stands lowest and least in the catalogue of details which go to the manufacture of a ship. It is the passenger who imposes upon the shipowner the obligations upon whose fulfilment the owning fraternity is never weary of complimenting itself. It is the imperious demand of the passenger that improves Jack's chances at sea by filling the ship's davits with boats, and her hold with bulkheads; it is the passenger who has qualified the old revoltingly hard

discipline of the ocean by obliging masters and mates to exercise caution in their use of bad words, to restrain their bullying impulses, and to show by their usage of sailors in general they are gradually getting to see that the mariner is possibly a man after all, and not the sort of dog he has for ages been considered. Legislation ought to help the mariner in this matter of his food as fully as it has assisted him in other ways. It is idle to talk of the inspection of stores; no functionary can be expected to overhaul tierces and casks and bags designed to last a large ship's company perhaps a twelvemonth or two years. One demands more magisterial sympathy for the seaman than he now gets, so that when he comes into court with a hunk of rotten meat in his hand as his apology for refusing to "turn-to," he may stand some chance of obtaining a hearing and a decision that shall have a moral value apart from its character as an act of justice.

The forecandle dietary is unquestionably to be greatly improved. The law that reaches out a long arm for the throat of the shore-going rogue who cuts up putrid carcasses into joints for the poor, ought surely to be able to provide another equally long limb for the use and protection of sailors. Perhaps the fear might be that if every man were punished who shipped food unfit for human consumption as stores for sailors, there would not be room for the culprits in the prisons of England. We oblige captains to serve out lime juice as a remedy or as a provision against scurvy, and yet we suffer ships to sail away with their holds full of scurvy-making material! It is not, surely, because salt pork and salt beef are cheap that hungry sailors, who lead the most toilsome of all the lives led by men in this world, should have the alternative forced upon them of either starving

or swallowing food which a hog indeed might toss with its snout, but which it would not assuredly offer to eat.

We live in an age of change, in a period marvellous for progress; but the pease soup, the green pork, the briny, iron-hard beef remain now as they have ever been—sailors' food, such as a kennel mongrel might starve on; the crying scandal of our mercantile marine; a shame the greater for the wilful blindness of the eyes which are turned upon it, and for the cold-blooded perversity with which it is perpetuated. So long ago as 1622 was first established the contract for victualling the Royal Navy; and here we find the traditional feeding fairly taking its departure. Every man's allowance I find in Schomberg was one pound of biscuit, one gallon of beer, two pounds of beef, with salt four days in the week, or else instead of beef, for two of those four days one pound of bacon or pork, and one pint of peas, and for the other three days in the week, one quarter of stockfish, half a quarter of a pound of butter, and a quarter of a pound of cheese. In those days there was no knowledge of tinned meats, of compressed vegetables, of those many varieties of canned foods with which the grocers' shelves and counters are now laden. Science provided no alternative; there was really nothing for it but beef and pork with such supplementary articles of diet as we find stated.

Yet it seems to me that the fore-castle fare of those days ought to be as much out of date as the rigs and build of our ancestors' ships. The sailor does not ask for fresh beef and mutton and pork, for new potatoes and green peas. He is fully aware that if meat be not salted it will not keep. But what he demands is, that the food supplied to him should be fit to eat, that it be of such a quality as would satisfy people ashore if they

had to consume it. And he also has a right to expect such additions to his ancient bill of fare as science easily enables his owners to provide him with. Indeed, this question of food is so vital a feature of the marine life, that one cannot but be amazed, so little should be made of it in fact ; though as I have said, reams of paper and floods of ink have been wasted on it. Dickens did much for workhouse regimen ; others have substantially helped the poor by indicating the secret injuries and injustices which affected them. But who has stood up for the sailor ? What able hand has conducted the landsman into the gloomy fore-castle, shown him the seaman seated on his chest with a tin dish between his knees, a sheath knife in his fist, pointed to the vileness of the substance off which the poor fellow is endeavouring to make a meal, explained how even a sullen or dissatisfied face put upon this mean, this most unnecessary hardship, is resented as an act of insubordination, punished as a piece of mutiny to be followed by loss of wages, by a term of imprisonment, by the ignominy of a felon's experience ? I know what the sea life is, pursued the vocation as a young man, and my keen interest in it keeps me still fully abreast of all, or at least most of its essential features or conditions ; and I do not scruple to say that if this question of sailors' food were carefully gone into, the exposure that would follow, the revelations that must attend inquiry, would fill the country with indignation, and excite a universal sentiment of astonishment that men could be found to patiently endure, with here and there a low murmur only at long intervals, usage infinitely more injurious than is to be rendered intelligible by the pen.

SAILORS' SUPERSTITIONS.

THERE are but few marine superstitions left. Here and there, perhaps, you may meet with a man who shall still count it unlucky to sail on a Friday, or who will found a prejudice for or against a ship upon some queer credulous fancy. But the marine life is scarce tinged in these days with the old romantic colours. Much is put down to steam, but education, the march of science, and above all, Time—that old, sly, bald-headed pricker of bubbles—are mainly responsible for the change. Whence came the old marine superstitions; out of what did they grow? My own humble opinion is that the modern Ancient Mariner owes very few of his sudorific notions to the classical Ancient Mariner. It is a mere waste of ingenuity, I think, to trace the mahogany-faced fellow into Homeric legend, to seek for signs of him in Carthaginian story, to hunt him through the dead languages for the inspiration of his hair-stirring imaginations. My notion is that what the modern Jacks believed in they got by looking over their ship's side, or by putting two and two together when things went right or wrong. One need only read the books of the early voyagers, as you will find them in the collections of Hackluyt, Purchas, Harris, and Churchill—to confine myself to my own country—to understand

how amazingly credulous the Ancient Mariner was, and how his faculty of imagination, working upon such material as the newly discovered radiant island, or the hushed midnight solitude in the heart of an Atlantic or Pacific sea, was certain to enrich maritime legendary lore to a degree far above the reach of those classic, timid seafarers who limited their explorations to the sunniest of European waters, keeping the land always close aboard.

There is a remarkable example of artless poetic insight in the observations of Sir Richard Hawkins (1593). To this man, as to scores of others of his own and of previous times, as of later days, indeed, everything that happens at sea has more or less of wonder or terror or beauty in it. He tells us of a calm that he experienced in the neighbourhood of the Azores. The stagnation lasted for nearly six months, "with which," says he, "all the sea became as replenished with severall sorts of gellyes and formes of serpents, adders, and snakes, as seemed wonderfull: some green, some blacke, some yellow, some white, some of divers colours; and many of them had life, and some there were a yard and a half and two yards long, which had I not seene I could hardly have believed." It needed an Ancient Mariner to see such a sight as this; but then the truth of its fancifulness, if I may so express myself, becomes evident when such a mind as Coleridge's, for instance, makes the presentment musical with rhyme, and glorifies it with an illuminating touch here and there, as one notices in the verses in the "Ancient Mariner"—

"The very deep did rot: O Christ,
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea!"

And again—

“Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire;
Blue, glossy green and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.”

The poet with the eye of genius witnesses in Hawkins's account of the dead calm the sort of colour he needs to enrich the mysticism of the “Rime” he is at work upon. No better illustration of the romantic character of the early navigators' tales and reports could be desired. And just as the poet would find them in exquisite correspondence with his own idealizing moods, in which he was soaring above everything real and possible into a region of sheer ghostliness, but a sphere very wonderful and lovely nevertheless, so would the sentiment of the age to which the ancient mariner belonged be of the sort to give to his accounts and relations the hue and spirit which would transform them into superb and brilliant superstitions.

Take, for example, the old belief in mermaids. There is surely no need to hark back for their origination to the fabled daughters of Achelous and Calliope. Jack owes nothing in my humble judgment to the nereids. If he had not seen a mermaid with his own eye, he would not have believed in her—put no more faith in such a thing than in the existence of Circe had that lady's name and story ever come to his ears. But quietly sailing along one day in his ship, leaning over the side, he sees a woman floating on the water. She has breasts of cream, hair of gold, eyes as sparkling and fair to behold as the liquid sapphire that cradles her. She extends her white and wooing arms and seems to court poor Jack with a smile. Now if there had been a man of science on board

—thank Heaven he had not made his appearance in those days!—he would have told the amazed and bristling sailor that the charming creature over the side was no white and lovely lady, as Jack imagined her, but on the contrary the very ugly fish called dugong, or manatee, which is a marine travesty of the human form as the monkey is the land one. But Jack, being left to his own imagination, returns with his yarn, which he spins in the delightfully quaint dialect of his day. It is true that during his passage home, whilst chewing the cud of this experience, he may have arrived at the conclusion that he was a little mistaken in imagining that the creature he had beheld was beautiful. But then his gallantry would supplement his desire to make the most of what he had seen. The creature was a woman, at all events, and his chivalry as a seaman imposed it as an obligation upon him that he should represent her as a sparkling charmer. We will suppose his story to be distrusted; but presently arrives some old shellback from the Western Ocean, full of a queer yarn about just such another floating woman. Then, maybe, comes a priest from the east coast of Africa, who with his own bodily eyes has beheld lovely ladies swimming about in a lake, with mackerel-like tails instead of legs. They wooed the celibate in vain; the priest took to his heels, but he did not need to catch their amorous glances to know what they were.

This in my opinion is the manner in which our latter-day notions of the naiad and the nereid grew. Indeed, the superstition of sailors are of themselves; begotten of the union of their imagination with their experiences, delightfully salt for that reason, and full of poetry too, fresh and scintillant as a bucket of brine, and owing little or nothing to what would be called classic inspira-

tion ; for which reason I reckon they are to be esteemed as highly original things.

Let us figure for example the first of the voyages of Columbus. Here you find a number of men going to sea with a strong predisposition to superstition in them, but with nothing clearly embodied to their fancy in the marine sense, I mean. The fire is alight, but the materials for cooking they must pick up as they sail along. Sea and sky they survey with eyes dilated by expectation of preternatural surprises. A rainbow astonishes them, not because it is a rainbow, but because it is exactly like the same arch which the sun paints upon showers falling in Spain and Portugal. Everything was to be strange and terrifying after they had lost sight of land, and they were willing even to find something alarming in commonplace resemblances. Then they are astonished by a dead calm, with a long burnished swell sweeping through it. Columbus himself is amazed by this, though he conceals his dismay. Surely this must be an enchanted ocean when the form and substance of a high sea are perceived and felt whilst there is not air enough stirring to cool the moistened finger. Then there was the composant—the St. Elmo's fire as it is called ; the mysterious lantern kindled at the mastheads and yardarms of ships by spirit hands. It is conceivable that one of those early Spanish mariners, gazing with quivering knees and protruding eyes at the airy, swaying, mystic flame, should quickly persuade himself of the phantasm of some large bland face within the sphere of the strange sheen, and so come to suppose that the whole atmosphere darkly shrouding the desolation of waters, furrowed now by the keel of man's handicraft for the first time, swarmed with spectres and visionary shapes. Strange sounds would

steal out from the distant dimness. *We* might know such noises to signify nothing more than the respiration of the whale, but to the primitive, startled, expectant ear, it was as though a sea-god had risen from the dark profound to sigh out to the stars some deep sorrow oppressing his mighty heart.

It is thus I think must be traced many of the superstitions of the sea; not to the poets of Greece and Rome, nor to the mythologies of the ancients, but to the sights and sounds which the early mariner was able to tell of when he returned from a voyage into parts that had scarce reflected any other sail than that of his own ship. When I was at sea the belief in the Fin as a magician was not yet dead. This will be about twenty years ago. One of our sailors told me that he had sailed with a Fin, and that there was no doubt that he had been able to control the winds, for on being deprived of his daily *tot* of rum for some offence, he raised a foul wind that held until the captain threatened to clap him in irons and lock him away down in the lazarette; when by some species of wizardry of which he was master he brought the breeze to blow abeam, after which it quartered and continued a fair wind as far as soundings in the mouth of the English Channel. So recently as 1857, a sailor belonging to a ship called the *Ruby Castle* was sentenced to death for killing a mulatto at sea. His defence was that he thought the man a Fin, and that he was doing his shipmates a service by putting him out of the way. Dana tells of a Fin who possessed a rum bottle which, though he was constantly drunk upon it, he managed to keep half full without ever replenishing it. He would stand this bottle up on the table before him and talk to it as if it were a live thing. He afterwards cut his throat.

These strange notions about Fins are a sort of survival of the very old belief that the people of Finland and of Lapland have it in their power to sell favourable gales of wind to persons willing to purchase such things. The mariner going to a Fin would for a consideration be supplied with a cord or handkerchief with three knots in it. Every knot as it was untied caused a gale to spring up. The first was a moderate wind, the second a small gale, the third a hurricane. Hence grew the belief that Finland ships never knew what a foul wind was, and plenty of sailors in their day have sworn to sighting vessels belonging to that country making a fair wind of stormy weather that has bowed ships of other nationalities, hove to under a shred of canvas, down to their waterways.

The Fin, I expect, has disappeared as a superstition ; and so, too, I fear, has the Flying Dutchman—an infinitely more picturesque detail of the ocean life, and, in my humble judgment, the most fascinating fancy which marine romantic invention has ever given us. There are many stories of death-ships and phantom-vessels, but there is only one *Flying Dutchman*. Greatly as I admire the genius of Marryat, I heartily wish that this amiable and delightful humorist had never meddled with Vanderdecken. The whole conception of the book is unworthy the grandeur of the romance. The law of probability that lies at the root of artistic effect is gravely and, as it seems to me, unnecessarily violated. At one moment Vanderdecken's craft is represented as a mere essence, a cloud-like conformation which passes over the ship that young Philip is aboard of, like a whirl of Scotch mist ; the next she is a substantial fabric, with stout decks upon which men can stand, and with beams, strong fastenings, and a fabric of spars and rigging,

which fall to pieces with loud noises when the crime is expiated.

The accepted version of the legend, as everybody knows, is that of a Dutch ship of the seventeenth century, bound to Amsterdam from Batavia. Off the Cape she meets with head winds, which so enrage the captain that a foul fiend enters him in the shape of a fit of blasphemy, for which he is punished by being compelled to keep the sea for ever, always having to contend with head gales, and always attempting, but in vain, to get to the westward of Agulhas. This is the sturdy old Dutch legend, and in its integrity it is good beyond expression; but scores of unshipshape liberties have been taken with it. The Phantom Ship has been made to appear in almost every known sea, thus rendering the traditional curse upon her ridiculous. A Frenchman would have us believe that if Vanderdecken visits a vessel all the wine turns sour, and all the food becomes beans. His crew are represented as hoary sinners, crimps, water-thieves, cowards, murderers, and the like. In this manner is the pathos of the noble story vitiated. Half the charm of the conception lies in the pity one is made to feel for the unoffending ship's company upon whom old Vanderdecken has brought down the vengeance of heaven.

I have somewhere read that the *Flying Dutchman* was no imaginary creation, and that the hero of the romance, was one Bernard Fokke, who flourished in the seventeenth century. It is said that he cased his masts in iron that he might "carry on," as it is called, without fear of "carrying away." He made the voyage to the Indies in ninety days, and was thought in consequence by the ambling mariners of that period to be in league with the devil. In what way he incurred the divine wrath is not stated. His crew, however, were more for-

tunate than Vanderdecken's, for it is supposed that he sailed with no one on board but his boatswain, cook, and pilot. But be the origin of the *Flying Dutchman* what it will, that stout old ship I fear ploughs now only the fairy waters of marine romance. She lives in the novel, the ballad, the opera; but she is no longer to be found in Jack's eye. He has ceased to keep a look-out for her. Any appearance that might suggest her to a fond mind he will explain away in the coolest, most unconcerned manner.

And so it is with that long-counted unlucky day Friday. For the disappearance of this superstition I think we may fairly hold the marine steam engine entirely accountable. The propeller permits not of rest, it has called into being that feverish demon called *Prompt Dispatch*. All days are alike to the steamer; and Friday indeed (as though she sought aggressive illustrations of her perversity) she seems to have adopted as a favourite day of sailing. "Freya," I read, "was in Shetland *Vana-dis*, or water-goddess, and her day Friday has been sacred to sailors for centuries, and hence an unlucky one for voyages." The prejudice or significance attached to the day is more probably owing to our Lord having suffered on a Friday. Time was when at sea every day had a character or influence of its own. Sunday was thought lucky, Monday a good day, probably because nothing ill was said of it, Tuesday not to be touched, as witness the Spanish proverb: "On Tuesday don't marry, don't go to sea, and don't leave your wife;" Wednesday and Saturday was also held in favour because of its being dedicated to a favourite deity (Thor).

Such old notions as may yet haunt the forecastle are prejudices rather than superstitions. Even in these

ocean passenger-going days few deep-water sailors relish the presence of a parson aboard them, and there is still current a strong antipathy to a dead body in the ship, not owing to any natural aversion to the corpse as such, but because it is still regarded as possessed of certain malignant powers. In olden times it was never for an instant doubted that a dead body was a certain cause of disaster to the ship that carried it. This strange superstition finds an illustration in Shakespeare's "Pericles": "Sir," exclaims a sailor, "your queen must overboard. The sea works high, the wind is loud and will not lie till the ship be cleared of the dead." "That's your superstition!" cries Pericles. "Pardon me, sir," responds the sailor, "with us at sea it hath been still observed, and we are strong in custom. Therefore, briefly, yield her; for she must overboard straight." Scores of instances are on record of sailors forcing their captains not only to fling the dead overboard too hurriedly to admit of funeral rites, but even to destroy whatever had belonged to the deceased, lest the clothing, chests, and the like should transmit the evil influences of the corpses.

The custom of hastily selling a sailor's effects by auction after he has tumbled overboard or received his last toss at the gangway may be in part owing to this superstition—to the desire, as it were, to swiftly distribute his belongings, and so thin out into comparative harmlessness their evil-working qualities. I have read of a shipmaster who was forced suddenly to "slip" with the confined body of a man ready for burial on board. His sailors not only insisted that the body should be instantly thrown over the side, but that the coffin should be cut into fragments and cast likewise into the sea.

The Jacks of to-day are to be congratulated on

having got rid of most of what they would themselves call "longshore swash." Life at sea in the olden days, bristling as it did with superstitions, must have been a very uncomfortable calling. Scarcely anything the eye met but was an omen, a portend. Superstition gilded the vocation, indeed, with the hues of romance, and in some directions maybe it was a sort of enjoyment in its way, but it is a thing better to read about than to experience. Figure for example the condition of mind of a man who would regard a waterspout as a sort of marine goblin that was only to be exorcised and put to flight by holding up the hilt of a sword in the form of a cross! I do not say that British credulity ever went so far as this; but for centuries there were fancies afloat under English colours which in respect of childishness and fanatical ignorance came very near to the crazy imagination of the Spaniards, the French, and the Portuguese. Superstition is a tyranny, and it needs but a little of it to render life burdensome. It is bothersome enough ashore in its intrusions into our prosaic everyday existence when we find ourselves uneasy if we spill a little salt, when we walk into the mud of the street that we may not pass under a ladder, when a mirror breaking by falling from our hands fills us with melancholy forebodings. But at sea, life is so prodigiously real, its perils there are so enormously in earnest, that marine existence must, I should think, have become an overwhelming obligation when its natural anxieties were weighted with the heavy load of preternatural suspicions and expectations. Hence, it is very well indeed that the forecastle should have been cleansed of the old intellectual "raffle" that encumbered it. The cat no longer carries a gale of wind in its tail; an albatross may be shot without all hands shortly after falling down

dead; the composant has ceased to be a saint, and there is no need now to drop down upon our knees with a prayer to it when it shows. All the wizardry has gone out of the Fin, and his mission as a wind-raiser has come to an end; the mermaid made her last dive long ago, and lies close in her coral pavilion at the bottom of the sea, the blinds down, and the hall door bolts shot. Yet with the departure of these old faiths has gone also the freshness and glory of the old sea dream. The poet may search the fore-castle now in vain for an inspiration; the slush-lamp has been extinguished; the fore-scuttle closed. We live in the iron deck-house; get the anchor with a steam-engine; climb iron rigging; blacken our faces and spring to our work with a shovel in our hands. But it is for the dreamer to repine—for the long-haired melancholy romancist who, seeking for pigments, finds only clinkers. For my part, I am very well satisfied to flourish in an age in which I can travel to New York in seven days and to New Zealand in a trifle over a month, and I certainly have no quarrel with my ship because her swift iron keel has shorn and rent and cattered the old poetic visions which once floated cloud-like upon the dark blue surface.

SAILORS' SONGS.

WHEN landsmen talk of sailors' songs they have in their mind the compositions of the Dibbins, of Arne, Carter, Shield, Henry Russell, Boyce, and others who have wedded verses on nautical subjects to hearty, melodious, and delightful strains, such as "Tom Bowling," "Stand to your Guns," "Wapping Old Stairs," "A Life on the Ocean Wave," "Ye Mariners of England," and so on. But when the seafarer talks of sailors' songs he has a quite different sort of production from these in his thoughts. If the truth must be told, but very few of the songs written by landsmen relating to the ocean life have found their way into Jack's heart and memory. He will hum the melodies, but for the most part the words go against the grain. The kind of ring he wants is wanting in them. It is not indeed that the poet is sparing in nautical terms; the mischief is that he misapplies them. When that amiable and agreeable poet, Dr. Charles Mackay, for instance, writes in "The Ship on Fire,"

"Ho, a sail! Ho, a sail! cries the man on the lee—
And they turned their glad eyes o'er the sea."

one suspects that the term *lee* was used, not because it presented itself in the form of an intelligible image to the poet, but because it rhymed very conveniently with

sea. For what is the meaning of "the man on the lee"? A sailor would speak of a man as being to leeward or on the lee side of a deck; but to be "on the lee" is, I take it, to be in one of those nautical situations which the maritime mind finds it impossible to understand.

In fact, there are two distinct sorts of sailors' songs, compositions of which only a very few indeed are sung by sailors, and compositions which nobody but sailors ever dream of singing. These last are well worthy of brief consideration. Some reckless modern has hurled the execrable term "chanty" at them, and the word, I am sorry to say, has stuck. I suppose the etymology of it must be sought in the French verb *chanter*. The "chanty," as it is now the custom to call it—pronounced "shanty," I believe, but I am very unwilling to have anything to do with it—is the modern generic appellation of the mariner's working song or chorus. It may be presumed that there is no landsman who needs to be told that when sailors heave upon a windlass, or wind round a capstan, or haul upon ropes, one of them will break into a song, which the rest at regular intervals pick up in a rousing chorus. These are Jack's working songs, and they are to be heard only on board ship. The words of these compositions might make the exclusiveness intelligible were it not that some of the melodies are so pretty, so plaintive, so catching, so full of the salt aromas of the deep, as to make one wonder that they should not long ago have found their way ashore, fitted to words more proper for the drawing-room and the concert hall, than Jack's rhymes to them. Such airs as "Across the Western Ocean," "The Plains of Mexico," "Yon rolling River," "Blow, Boys, Blow," and a few others—not many, I admit—harmonized by an able

musician, and associated with good poetry, should scarcely fail, I think, to captivate the shore-going ear, and hold to it with scarcely less tenacity than may be witnessed in its adherence to maritime memory and sympathy.

But be that as it may, the working sea-song is essentially the sailor's, and remains his absolutely. Something of the romantic colouring that renders the ocean life brilliant to the imagination would depart from it with the extinction of Jack's sea-song. You appreciate its virtue of enrichment when for example you stand watching a large ship getting under way. As the pawls of the windlass utter their metallic notes to the slow grinding cadence of the chain cable torn link by link in through the iron throat of the hawse-pipe, there breaks into this harsh dissonance the hoarse peculiar tones of a seaman beginning a song, and a moment or two after a hurricane chorus breaks from the lungs of his toiling shipmates, and sweeps to the ear in an echo so corresponding with all fancies which the sight of the sea begets in a man, that the shriek of the gale in the naked rigging, the thunder of colliding billows, is not truer to the spirit and meaning and disclosures of the mighty deep.

Poets and novelists know the value of Jack's song as pigments for heightening the veri-similitude of their canvases with dashes of vital accuracy. What is the picture of a storm at sea, shorn of the hoarse bawling of the sailors? Let the mariners haul dumbly upon clew-line and reef tackle, upon tacks and halliards, and half the wonder and fear of the tempest is missing. Paint your ship in a sudden gale of wind, the yards on the caps, the fore and aft canvas slatting and roaring to the released halliards, the white water washing breast high

in the lee scuppers, the air dark as night, the sea bursting in snowstorms over the bow and falling like cartloads of bricks upon the deck, to every blow of which the whole fabric shudders like some sentient thing newly wounded. Your imagination may be good so far, but it does not suffice. The human note of the seaman must be added. His gruff voice must mingle with the war-ringing on high and the wild commotion of seething and hissing below. It enters into the whole with something of a spiritualizing power. You feel the beat of the heart strong in the wild, strange, harsh music at such a time. The song rises like an inspiriting defiance. It breathes the very essence of ocean life as does the cry of a sea-fowl heard in the heart of one of the many vast solitudes of the deep. I am speaking, of course, of the effect of the sea song upon the artistic imagination. It is mere habit, to be sure, that makes Jack bawl out, and he must have his song, though the carpenter stands white as a sheet whilst he examines his rod fresh drawn from the well.

I think it may be taken that we owe the sailors' working song as we now possess it to the Americans. How far do these songs date back? I doubt if the most ancient amongst them is much older than the century. It is noteworthy that the old voyagers do not hint at the sailors singing out or encouraging their efforts by choruses when at work. In the navy, of course, this sort of song was never permitted. Work proceeded to the strains of a fiddle, to the piping of the boatswain and his mates, or in earlier times yet, to the trumpet. The working song then is peculiar to the Merchant Service, but one may hunt through the old chronicles without encountering a suggestion of its existence prior to American independence and to the establishment of a

Yankee marine. It is at least certain that the flavour of many of these songs is distinctly Transatlantic. The melodies it might be impossible to trace. Just as "Yankee Doodle" is an old English air Americanized by the inspirations of the Yankee poet, so there may be many an old tune that owed its existence to British brains appropriated by the Boston and New York lyrists, and fitted to words so racy of the soil as to render the whole production as entirely Yankee to the fancy as are the stripes and stars or the cotton white canvas of the ships of the States.

The introduction and growth of these working songs would form an interesting story in a review of maritime progress. Indeed a long chapter might be written upon the artificial stimulants, such as whistles, music, drums, and so forth, imported into the marine to impel the sailor to activity and to communicate the important quality of uniformity to his efforts. In the early days of European navigation, shipboard discipline was largely governed by military habits and practices; in fact, more was made of the soldiers than the sailors on board ship. In the Spanish navy the soldiers were rated high above the mariners; they fought the guns, defended the ship's side, boarded, and in short did the work of the Jacks of a later date; whilst the mariners, on the other hand, were hired for no other purpose than to make or shorten sail, an employment that proved intolerably hazardous during an engagement, for as the sailors went aloft they were shot down, so that it would again and again happen, after a Spaniard had been some time in action, he would scarce have a single so-called sailor to work the ship.

Out of this marine militarism grew the trumpeter. Monson, in his "Naval Tracts," quaintly puts the duties

of this officer : " For the mere reputation of this man's service in a ship of the King's, and under an admiral, it is fit he should have a silver trumpet, and himself and his noise to have banners of silk of the admiral's colours. His place is to keep the poop, to attend the general's going ashore and coming aboard, and all other strangers or boats, and to sound as an entertainment to them ; as also when they hail a ship, or when they charge, board, or enter her. They set the watch at eight of the clock at night, and discharge it in the morning, and have a can of beer allowed them for the same. This is not only incident to an admiral, but to all captains that carry a noise of trumpets with them." There was no regular navy in those days ; the State, or the Queen, rather, owned some ships, but when a fleet was needed, the ranks of the so-called vessels of the navy were recruited by privately owned craft, which were merchantmen to all intents and purposes, so that the trumpet sounded in them as in the fabrics belonging to the realm. In due course a lighter sort of music replaced the blare of this instrument ; but the working chorus, Jack's song of toil, as one may call it, never found its way into the navy. The reason is intelligible. The perfection of the discipline of a man-of-war is expressed by swiftness and silence. A ship's company of five or six hundred seamen roaring out in gangs as they dragged upon the various ropes would form an insupportable condition of manœuvring. Besides, there are so many arms to do the work, that the song would be of no use as an encouragement.

But the working chorus takes a distinctive character when you think of it in reference to the small crew of a merchantman. Captains and mates so well understand the heartening influence of the song upon the sailor's toil, that half the official rhetoric of the forecastle and

the quarter-deck is formed of entreaties to the men to sing out; to "Sing and make a noise, boys!" To "Heave and pawl!" To "Heave and raise the dead!" To "Sing to it, lads; sing to it!" A new song will sometimes be as good as a couple of new men to a ship's forecastle; hence in the merchant service sailors' songs, in the strict sense of the expression, are of incalculable value. To be sure in these days steam and patent machinery have diminished something of the obligation of these chants. A donkey engine does its work without a chorus; it needs not a fiddler to set a steam capstan revolving. But the manual windlass is still plentiful, the capstan bar of our forefathers is not yet out of date, though the single topsail is halved there is yet the upper yard to masthead; and these, with a hundred other jobs to be done aboard a sailing ship, keep the sailors' sea-song actively current.

There is another use in Jack's song, too. It is a vehicle through which his mutinous indignation may exhale without grave risk of the log-book or the irons. Many a salt has eased his soul of the pent-up hate of the captain and mates within it by converting his resentment into poetry whilst dragging at the rigging. It is an easy method of bearding a skipper or of abusing a mate. The wit of the indignant tar is not lost upon the chorus tailing on behind him, who roar out the louder for the sympathy they feel with the sentiments of the marine soloist. But a wise captain takes no heed of the sentiments thus obscurely conveyed. He allows Jack to have his song, be the words what they will, satisfied that the venom of them should accomplish his own desires by making the sailors work more determinedly and nimbly. Indeed it is a very bad sign if merchant sailors maintain silence whilst they pull and haul. In

no other way could they more significantly manifest disaffection. A silent crew is a sullen crew, ripe for mischief.

An old sailor recalls with a sigh the heaving of the capstan of his day. "It is one of the many soul-stirring scenes," he says, "that occur on board when all hands are turned up; the motley group that man the bars, the fiddler stuck in a corner, the captain on the poop, encouraging the men to those desperate efforts that seem to the novice an attempt at pulling up the rocks by the root. It is a time of equality; idlers, stewards and servants, barbers and sweepers, cooks and cooks' mates, doctors' mates and loblolly boys; every man runs the same road, and hard and impenetrable is that soul that does not chime in with the old ditties, 'Pull away now, my Nancy O!' and the long 'Oh!' that precedes the more musical strain of—

" 'Oh, her love is a sailor,
His name is Jemmy Taylor;
He's gone in a whaler
To the Greenland Sea.'"

" Or—

" 'Oh! if I had her,
Eh, then, if I had her,
Oh! how I could love her,
Black although she be!'"

The sailor's trick of improvising furnishes a very varied character to his working songs. A man having exhausted all the rhymes he knows, with a good deal of pulling and hauling still remaining, will often venture upon a doggerel of his own instead of repeating what he has already said. Words of certain songs have indeed a permanency, but I doubt if it would be possible to express the peculiar nature of the sailors' working songs,

by printing the verses which are supposed to accompany the airs. Words are varied again and again; line after line is made up on the instant; the reader may reject with confidence any collection that is offered to him as samples of the poetry which Jack roars out when he heaves or drags. In truth, but a very little of the real thing would bear the light of day.

I remember a lady writing to ask me to assist her in forming a collection of the sailors' working songs, and I could not help thinking that if by Jack's songs she meant the "chanties," as they are now called, she would be starting on a quest which I might expect to hear in a very little time she had relinquished with a hot face and a shocked heart. No, the mariner is not very choice in his language. His working ditties are a little too strong for print, on the whole. The few examples I have seen in type are Bowdlerized out of knowledge. He may have reformed in this matter of late years; he may sing nothing to-day that is not virginal in purity; but in my time—and it is not so very long ago either—his working choruses reeking with fore-castle fancies, were as full of the unrepeatable and the unprintable as his biscuit was of weevils. In sea stories, however, the sailors' working song is seldom or never given. Dana will speak of the crew having struck up such and such an air—"Cheerily, Men," or "Heave to the Girls," or "Tally hi ho, you know," but he confines his reference to the titles.

In most works the songs introduced are of the Dibdin school. In an American story, entitled "The Nimrod of the Sea," an English and an American crew come together in one fore-castle. After the joke and the yarn follows the song. A Yankee strikes up with—

"It ofttimes has been told,
That the British sailors bold,
Could whip the tars of France so neat and handy, oh!
But they surely found their match
When the Yankees did them catch,
For the Yankee boys at fighting proved right handy, oh!"

The English sailors are described as looking glum, though bearing it right manfully. They were possibly supported by the superstition that the greater portion of these Yankee boys who proved "right handy, oh!" at fighting were British subjects seduced from their allegiance by the substantial bribes and the soft soap of bunting inscribed with "Sailors' Rights!" and other sham texts. In requital an English seaman sung a song about the fight between the Chesapeake and the Shannon, "the words of which," says the author, "I did not take to heart, as no true American takes any interest in that fight." Nevertheless the song was accepted as an affront, and a Yankee in revenge sang a set of stanzas, beginning:—

"You Parliaments of England, and House of Commons too,
You'd better mind what you're about and what you're going to do;
You're now at war with Yankees, and I'm sure you'll rue the day
You roused the Sons of Liberty in North A-meri-ca."

An English tar, losing his patience, threw the bread kit at the head of the singer. The heart of oak was instantly stretched by a long Yankee arm. Then followed a scrimmage, which was stopped only by the two captains tumbling in amongst the fighters through the scuttle. I refer to this lively passage to illustrate the sort of songs which sea novelists and marine writers introduce in their works as sung by sailors. But practically this species of composition is of the Dibdin school,

and suggests nothing whatever as regards the peculiar character of the compositions which Jack delivers with a hurricane note at the capstan, the windlass, or the halliards. For my part, experience tempts me to accept with suspicion the assurance of seamen trolling verses of the above kind. I think it would be found that Jack's taste, when away from his own working songs, lies in the last new music hall vulgarity. He will have changed greatly if he does not choose to enliven his dog watch with "Two Lovely Black Eyes," or whatever else is latest in this special walk in the musical art rather than with "Tom Bowling," or "The Saucy Arethusa," or "I'm Afloat." There is an Admiralty edition of Dibdin's songs, but it may be doubted whether the iron heart of the armour-clad has ever resounded to the strains of a single one of them, or whether the publication has ever done so much as to transform a solitary merchantman into a blue jacket. Many of them are fine songs, delightful to sing and delightful to listen to, but they long ago fulfilled their mission; for all practical sailorizing purposes their day is over. Long previous to Dibdin there were stirring sea songs in existence. They are but faint dim echoes in our time, mere mutterings as from a sepulchre, yet they relate a hundred tales of glory, and to the imaginative mind are radiant still with the splendour of the achievements of a race of sea-giants. How many an old pigtail has wagged to the inspiring influence of—

"Come all ye jolly sailors with courage stout and bold,
Come enter with bold Sawyer, he'll clothe you all in gold;
Repair on board the old *Nassau*,
As fine a ship as e'er you saw;
We'll make the French to stand in awe,
She's mann'd with British boys."

How many a long-ago-foundered fabric has re-echoed with—

“The fourteenth day of August, in Plymouth Sound we lay,
On board the *Common Order*, we could no longer stay;
As on the coast of Ireland, our orders did run so,
It was to cruise, but ne’er refuse, when we met with our proud foe;
We had not sailed many leagues before we did espy
A lofty sail to the windward come bearing down so nigh;
They hailed us in French, my boys, and asked from whence we came,
Our answer was from Liverpool, and the *London* was our name.”

What scores upon scores of long since silent throats
have stormed out with the following:—

“How happy are we, now the wind is abaft,
And the boatswain he pipes, Haul both our sheets aft;
Steady, steady, says the master, it blow a fresh gale,
We’ll soon reach our port, boys, if the wind does not fail.
Then drink about, Tom, although the ship roll,
Then drink about, Tom, although the ship roll,
We’ll save our rich liquor,
We’ll save our rich liquor by flinging the bowl.”

Yet human nature changes but little in essentials through the ages, and of all flesh the most conservative is Jack. I dare say he merely repeats in the taste he exhibits to-day for the last new flash ditty of the music hall in preference to the numerous compositions which land-going musicians and poets have taken the trouble to manufacture for him, the same sort of taste that flourished generations ago in the ’tween decks of the old timber castles of William and Ann and the Georges. Need we doubt that the pigtailed brave forsook the songs expressly composed for him for new pretty catching airs in the “Beggar’s Opera,” or “Love in a Village,” or “Artaxerxes”? In the matter of singing the sailor will be found most nautical when he is at his work, and he

is kept so hard and long at work that his nauticalism grows to a height that is out of proportion to his sailorly craving, so that when he has coiled down and made an end he is glad to freshen the hawse with songs which have no reference whatever to the sea; for which no man who knows anything of his life would blame him.

POETIC ASPECTS OF SEA-LIFE.

IN Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast," a book fascinating for its simplicity of style, its exquisite sincerity, its sagacity as an interpretation of the deep-lying, hidden conditions of the mariner's vocation, there is a passage that will very pleasantly serve me as a text on which to hang this brief discourse touching the poetic aspects of sea-life. Two sailors, one of whom is Dana, are out upon the jibboom, furling the jib there. The vessel is homeward bound, the night is quiet, a clear dusk, the heavens a sheet of hovering silver with the countless stars which lie like dust upon them; the water is smooth, the soft trade wind is breathing with just weight enough to keep every sail steady, the canvas in studding-sails hangs far over the ship's side and mounts along with the inner cloths, into spires, crowned at each summit by the dainty skysail that, high aloft, wan and glimmering in the star-torched obscurity, looks vague as a fragment of pearly vapour caught, cobweb-like, by the sweep of the towering spars through the air. The jib being furled, Dana lay over the boom a minute or two, lost in admiration of this lovely night picture of the silent gliding fabric. His companion, an old salt, seemed equally struck, and instead of "laying in" with the alacrity of a tar who is glad to make an end of a furling job, he remained with Dana looking up at the

sails, until the full beauty of the sight entering his prosaic old heart in a sort of passion, as it were, he softly exclaimed, breathing deep, "How quietly they do their work!"

Now there is a certain class of sailor in whom Dana's old salt's admiration of a lovely effect at sea would excite nothing but sneers. If there is one kind of mariner more objectionable than another, it is the pert, cocksure, derisive son of a gun who, having no eye for nature himself, believes in the existence of nothing outside the daily routine of his life and his own two-penny tastes and humours. A man having made a few voyages, sits down and writes a book of his adventures, and the first thing he is eager to tell us is that there is no romance at sea, that sailors never admire, that what a landsman might regard as a glorious and impressive scene scarcely wins a sulky glance from Jack, who can witness nothing but the commonplace in it. We are to believe, in short, that the sailor is as much an animal as the dog.

Well, this view to be sure may be accepted, but under strict if comprehensive limitations. There are sailors, no doubt, more than is needful considering they belong to the objectionable class, who would convert the mariner's life into as sheer a piece of animalism as is the existence of the old sow housed beneath the long-boat. These are fellows who exhibit scarcely one instinct to justify us in allowing them a footing even on the lowest platform of humanity. Their tastes and their habits are those of the animal; only that the animal is distinctly ahead of them by never giving a loose rein to bad passions and blasphemous language. If I am to be told that sailors of this kind could witness nothing in scenes that would thrill through a landsman's heart, I

should agree as fully as in any man's assurance that monkeys have tails. But let us very resolutely decline to accept those sottish, ignorant, insolent, cocksure worthies who, if they were in the majority, would render the vocation of the sea a quite unendurable life for blasphemy, ill-usage, and the most slum-like and gross of all imaginable human ignorance: let us obstinately decline, I say, to accept such dull illiterate creatures as these as representatives of the men who follow the calling of the ocean. One of this kind of sailors might derisively jeer at the picture of an old salt quietly lying over a jibboom, lost in admiration of the silent spectral beauty of the airy stately fabric that is bearing him home; but Heaven bless us! who would not rather have such an old salt for a shipmate than the tobacco-chewing blockhead who dips into the dustbin of his mind for something foul to heave at the contemplative old tar? Are we to accept the sailor's life as formed of nothing but masticating quids, sucking at dusky pipes, swilling greasy pea soup, and grubbing hog-like, at the pork in the mess kid? Shall we say that there is never a streak of sentiment to be found in the fellow's composition? The sea is a bitter hard life, but it is not so bitterly hard as all that. It will coarsen a man, but it never *vulgarizes* him. What of nobility he carries to it, it will insensibly cherish and enlarge in the soul. The cocksure, ridiculing swab of a sailor would be the same cocksure, ridiculing alley-man were he a chimney sweep or a potman. It will not be the sea that makes him what he is. He goes to it stiff with congenital vices and infirmities, and it is this sort of man who gives out that there is no sentiment at sea, no romance, no colour of any kind, no capacity of emotion in the sailor's breast, no power of appreciation; scarce an instinct, in short, to warrant him human.

Do not let the landsman believe all that he hears about sailors. Put all the swabs going to sea on one side, and you still leave a man of genial intelligence, roughened, indeed, by the severities of the life, but very far removed from the coarse caricature created as impressions by the behaviour and representations of the cocksure, ignorant, wooden-headed seafarers. One need but think a little to realize the character of the influence that the ocean must exert over any sort of intelligence, short of that order which is fitter for the sty than the forecastle. A story is told of a sailor, a rough, hectoring, swearing sort of fellow, who asked one of the boys in the ship to lend him his Bible. The boy said he was afraid he would make fun of it. "No, no," said the other, "I don't ridicule God Almighty."

The form of piety we are used to ashore may not be very visible to the sailor, that is to say, in the description of sailor upon whom I have my eye, having turned my friends the swabs adrift; but rough and crude as may be the religious feeling in him, it is there all the same, a quality of reverence scarcely intelligible to the man himself, yet influencing, sobering, subduing him to moods sanctified by pathos, by reason of their profound and touching simplicity of thought. It could not very well be otherwise with a man even of the homeliest intelligence. The Spirit of the Creator is never so close to one as at sea. Where else should one look for manifestations of the Divine presence if not to the ocean—to that symbol of eternity, more overwhelming to the imagination because of its materiality than the infinite heights of the blue space of heaven into which the gaze goes, leaving reason blind behind it? If it were not for the schoolboy-like fear of derision that haunts the nautical mind, I do not doubt that a large

proportion of our English seamen would discover a degree of religious feeling which will be sought in vain as matters stand; that is to say, by one who would take stock of such things by observation of the superficial life of the men. Indeed, when a man is respected for his sincerity no derision will attend his efforts. I remember being shipmate with a fine intellectual sailor, a man with as refined a face and as gentle and expressive an eye as ever I met, who, during the voyage, made a practice during one of the dog watches in fine weather to read the Bible in the fore-castle to such as chose to listen to him. He could get no hearers for a good while, but I do not know that from the moment of his beginning this thing that the roughest, most unfeeling fellow in the ship ventured even to whisper so much as a jest at the man's struggle to be of service to his fellows. He was universally known as a smart and a sure hand, an excellent seaman in all senses, quiet, gentle, unobtrusive, with a hearty laugh, one that a shipmate would go to in trouble, sure of sympathy and of such help as the poor fellow's slender resources permitted. There are scores of seamen resembling this man still afloat, and well would it be for the discipline, dignity, and reputation of our great commercial marine if they possessed his pluck, his fearless indifference to what might be thought and said in his resolution to prove that a good sailor may be a good Christian.

One finds out how false is the heedlessness amongst sailors to the wonders and glories, the terrors and the beauties of the ocean, when one falls into their company and talks to them. Take a seat amongst a number of seamen, and presently tell of something fine or thrilling that you have witnessed, exhibiting the romance of it, submitting it with such colours as you can recall, and it

will be strange if all hands are not presently yarning about the sights they have witnessed in their day, speaking of them with an appreciation and ardour that must surely convince the listener that sailors are not the moles, the blind grubbing degraded sensualists which the objectionable specimens amongst them would have us believe.

I remember once conversing with several seamen and telling them of my early impressions of going aloft, how after climbing the shrouds had ceased to be a novelty and I had lost the nervousness I felt at first, I would often linger, after having loosed or helped to roll up a sail, to view the magnificent scene of ocean spreading into infinite distance, and to muse upon the tiny speck our ship, big as she was, made upon that vast expanse—a fancy well accentuated to me, high aloft, by the little figures of the men running about the decks far below.

When I had ceased, one of the company, the most unpromising-looking of them all, a broken-nosed man with a great coarse mat of ginger-coloured hair upon his throat and chin, told of having taken the weather earing of the maintopsail when it was blowing hard. It was warm weather, he said, and a dry gale; the water was full of fire, and the ship was rushing through it at a great speed, the wind a little abaft the beam. He said he never troubled himself to look at anything until the sail was reefed, and then he was so fascinated by the sight of the ship in the gloom that he remained jockeying the yard-arm, lost in admiration, till a yell from the mate brought him to his senses. Of course his business was to "lay down" promptly with the rest of the fellows so as to make one at the halliards, but though he was an old hand at seafaring, there was something so grand in

the sight of the ship running like a spectre through the gloom, with the water leaping up in emerald and sun-bright fire all about her that, beginning to look, he continued to do so, forgetting everything but the sight until he was peremptorily bawled at. Here now was as rough and prosaic a mind as one could well imagine, coarse in utterance, seamed with the scars of a hundred dissipations, moved to a recital rich in poetry through recollection of an impression which he could only have received by possession of twenty unsuspected qualities.

One of your cocksure swabs, some latter-dayswaggerer charged to the gorge with the insolences of his calling, would probably, had he made one of our company, have sneered at the fellow as a sentimentalist, as very fit to pass for a green hand, for talking such "longshore swash" about a great ship rushing through the faintness of the star-clad night, with a boiling of fiery waters along her side, and a wake of glorious jewels rising and falling astern of her till the tail of it vanished in the windy dusk. It is nautical men of his pattern who, not having any capacity of admiration outside the quality of appreciating the noble, blood-red hue of a glass of rum, endeavour to check all honest recognition of the poetic aspects of the calling in their mates by scoffs, couched in the dialect of Ratcliffe Highway.

Now, the men who listened to the fellow's description of the sight of the ship as he viewed her from the yard-arm, were all of them seasoned Jacks, men by whose side in an hour of difficulty and danger the cocksure swab would probably cut the meanest imaginable figure; and I took notice that so far from finding anything absurd in a seaman admiring a stirring and noble oceanic picture, they had all of them one after the other something to say in the same direction; one memory

kindling others, so that I carried away with me from that hoarse, salt assemblage, a mind enriched by a mass of fine marine imagery. The conversation ran somewhat after this fashion :—

“Well, there’s no doubt, as Bill says, that a ship blowing along through a smother of fire is a thing worth looking at and remembering. I’ve known the time when I’ve took my pipe on to the jibboom, just for the sake of watching the ship come at me. It was in the north-east trades, I recollect, one evening homeward bound; the foretopmast-stunsail was aloft, everything drawing hard as iron, mates, the wind a fresh breeze, and the ship doing a good thirteen; with the sky all away to port coloured a dark red and the sea there heaving green against it. Ah!” he exclaimed, drawing in a deep breath, “no use a-talking of steam. Arter a sight like that, ’twon’t be the engine-room that’ll come into a man’s mind. Why she was piling it to the hawse pipes, every bow of her sending the foam in thunder to far ahead of the water over which I was a sitting, and there she was always a-coming at me, leaning well down to it, as beautiful a show as the ocean ever offered—a frigate-built ship, lads, with single tops’ls and yards square enough for the *Royal George*.”

“Ay,” says another, “that’s right enough; but there’s nothing oncommon in it as a sight. Tell yer of a scene that’s a touch above a man’s power of describing, though he should boss the whole world as a maker of them books called dictioneerries. It was away down off the Horn in mid-winter—the latitood fifty-five degrees or thereabouts. ’Twas about the hardest blow I was ever in, and the sea was running at our ship like cliffs. Ye may read in a book of shipwrecks of some of the sailors going mad at the sight of the seas rolling down

upon their craft, and though it's not a very understandable thing, yet I've only got to recall that there gale off the Horn to believe it. Well, we was hove-to, of course, and away to wind'ard of us, stretching from the star-board cathead to the quarter, were five or six icebergs, the biggest about eight hundred feet high, and *him* about three-quarters of a mile distant. I had the wheel in the first watch, and shouldn't forget the picture if I should live as long again as from now back to the time of Noah's ark. I never see anything more frightful and grand too than the bursting of the seas against the sides of these bergs. They was like lanterns in their way, seemed to put a sort of light into the air all about 'em that wasn't light neither, as though they was still reflecting the moonshine that might have whitened 'em when the sky was clear and she was up. I had not been on deck half-an-hour when the smallest of 'em, about the size of all the cathedrals in England put together, 'cluding St. Paul's, capsized. This chap was well on the bow about two mile off, but though it was blowing in thunder through the darkness, the crash and boiling of that fall came right athwart the gale, clear as the note of a bell struck when all's still. That was a sight to beat your yard-arm view, Billy."

And then another man told of a breathless midnight calm on the ocean a little to the north of the Falkland Islands, a long swell full of weight chasing the sea in dusky folds, but with such pendulum-like regularity that the swaying of the ship by it was scarce noticeable for the intervals betwixt the long drawn heavings. Suddenly out of the dead silence upon these soundless and foamless rollers there arose a noise as of some vast giant fetching a deep breath in his slumber, and a minute after the sound was repeated on the ship's quarter, and

then again on the starboard beam, and yet once more off the port bow, and so on, and so on, all with a sort of regularity betwixt the intervals that made the sound a form of colossal breathing lifelike, and wild and startling for that reason and because of the hush upon the water and the blackness, and the movement of the giant swell running in its volumes more noiselessly than a kitten creeps. It was but a number of whales or grampuses rising to the midnight surface to blow, but though the thing was no picture, as the man wanted to point out, it left an impression upon the mind full of awe and mystery, the more so by token that there was just starlight enough with a red streak of westering moon to faintly show out the shape of the leviathans oozing up like vast blots of ink into the dusk, and blending their lumps of blackness with the inky coil of the swell.

Indeed, who that goes to sea with eyes in his head, and some quality of imagination behind them to help their reports, but returns home with a memory stored with noble, beautiful, thrilling, terrifying, tender recollections? A voyage, to an observer, will convert his mind into a picture-gallery. There must be a deal of the fool in a man who takes the sea-life as owners and captains create it for him. You give me disgusting victuals; you put me to hard and dirty work; you oblige me to climb the shrouds, and give battle to the ice-hardened canvas; you send me to the royal masthead, dangling a slush-pot; you sling me over the side in a bowline till I could wish, out of loathing for the work, that the noose would slip from my posterior to my neck, and make a hanged man of me out of hand. This is your routine, and I accept it as a sailor for the wages and accommodation I receive, and make the best of it. But

is the sea-life to end at this? Why, if it were not for the poetic aspects of the vocation, there would not be a single sweetener of any kind of description to be found in the hard, half-starved calling; but though my skipper sends me aloft with a slush-pot, he cannot hinder my heart expanding to the sight of the spacious amphitheatre, high amid which I sit, airily dangling, with the sails swelling up to me in clouds of milk-white softness, as though forsooth I needed but a pair of wings to look like an angel on some mediæval canvas! And though I tumble out of my blankets, grim and unshaven, to wash down the decks to the tune of the mate's voice that rings like the roar of a bull, there is no magic in scrubbing brushes and squilgees, in the gushing of a hose or the clanking of a pump, to neutralize for me the melancholy beauty of daybreak at sea, the sifting of the eastern gray into the airy dusk, the glorious revelation of the long-sparkling beam of the rising sun flashing the gloom into a spirit-stirring scene of heaven and white cloud and azure seas melting into foam as they run. Well for mankind that all who go to sea are not of the cocksure swab type. The lovely pictures of Michael Scott, the tender and delightful sketches of George Cupples, the finely coloured interpretations of Herman Melville, Marryat's genial, dashing descriptions, the sober paintings of Fenimore Cooper, Dana's incomparable touches—how should we have fared in the matter of such dear old friends as these if they had taken the cocksure view of the ocean life, viewed it with the consumedly manly eye of the swab to whom everything outside of rum and water and shipboard discipline is mere sentiment, to be sneered at as a sort of cheap piety? Surrounding the strenuous narrow life of the sailor is another life—mighty, full of wonder and mystery

and beauty, high as the heaven, wide as the ocean girdle and deep as the South Atlantic. Shall a man be sneered at as sentimentalist for carrying to sea with him an eye capable of witnessing things more ennobling, purifying, exalting than anything he can discover betwixt the rails of his ship? For my part, I recall with gratitude the hardships I underwent for the sake of the beautiful memories which stand side by side with them.

THE SHIPMASTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES.

"We trust our lives to our seamen," says Thackeray in one of the most impressive of his "Roundabout Papers." "And how nobly they fulfil their trust! They are under heaven as a providence for us. Whilst we sleep their untiring watchfulness keeps guard over us."

The novelist is not the only great writer who has testified to the skill and pluck of the British merchant captains. A landsman fresh from the sea thinks with gratitude of the plain, hearty commander who has navigated him in safety through hundreds and perhaps thousands of miles, and the clearer and more sympathetic his imagination is, the livelier are the impressions he carries away with him, the sincerer is his admiration of the uncomplaining dutifulness of the man whose back has borne the burthen of the whole of the responsibilities embodied in the great fabric he governs, the more ardent and generous his recognition of the qualities which must unite in the creation of a person fit to accept so significant and solemn a trust as that of the navigation and control of a large ship freighted with commodities rich enough to represent the value of a German principality, and filled with human lives utterly and absolutely dependent for their safety upon the vigilance, experience, and good sense of the man on whom has

devolved the business of transporting them from one sea to another.

There is indeed something in the ocean calling that fascinates with a power in proportion to the strength of the intellect that receives its impulses. Over the highest and largest minds its influence is most potent. What other condition of creation owns the mystery that is possessed by the sea, glad with light or solemn and subduing with darkness, instinct with eternal motion from the delicate miraculous grace of the ripple to the thunderous and menacing grandeur of the mountainous surge? The ocean appeals to the mind as a kind of materialized eternity, a lovely and incomparable world of wonders. It is inevitable then that all gifted with sympathies quick and deep in capacity of admiration and awe, must follow with an interest which they cannot find it in them to extend to any other vocation, the fortunes and calling of the mariner.

But let this great maritime country fittingly honour the men through whose integrity, knowledge, and determination the commercial flag of Great Britain remains the dominant bunting of the world. Thackeray speaks in that same "Roundabout Paper" from which I have quoted, of the "glow of eager enthusiasm" with which the captain of a Peninsular and Oriental steamship received the question whether he did not think a ribbon or order would be welcome or useful in his service. That question was asked some thirty years ago. If Thackeray's friend, the captain, was yet living, he might possibly listen to such a suggestion with a smile, but hardly with "a glow of eager enthusiasm." He might tell the great novelist that shipmasters did not trouble themselves much about ribands; that orders of merit were not likely to be of much use to them; that better than any sort of

bauble would be a recognition on the part of the public of their lives and calling which would make them believe that all the fine things which have been written about them are meant by the authors and understood by the readers. When Thackeray made that suggestion to the P. and O. captain he was at sea walking the deck of a steamer side by side with her master, and everybody knows how being at sea improves people's opinions of sailors as a body, and more especially of captains. The author of "*Vanity Fair*," whilst he walked with the captain, was fresh from the experience of a gale of wind. He had taken note of the vigilance of the commander, of his deep anxiety, most admirably concealed however under a cheery countenance when he came into the saloon among the passengers, and it is intelligible that gratitude should have been lively in him when he walked that day with the "skilful, gallant, well-bred, and well-educated gentleman" the captain, as the steamer journeyed to Civita Vecchia.

Yet masterly as was Thackeray's instant grasp of most features and forms of our everyday life, he would have needed to make more voyages than that trip to Civita Vecchia to arrive at an understanding of the true meaning of the sea life. "To say," wrote Charles Dickens in his description of a storm in the Atlantic, "that all is grand and all appalling and horrible in the last degree is nothing. Words cannot express it. Thoughts cannot convey it. Only a dream can call it up again in all its fury, rage, and passion." This the sailor will smile at as the wonder and awe and apprehension of a highly imaginative mind confronted with conditions absolutely novel to it; but the reflective landsman might go a little further. What did the skipper think of the gale that appalled and horrified

Charles Dickens? It was his business to be out in it all night to begin with, to be leaning against it, to be staring blindly into it, to be fighting it with a heart and face of iron, and a frame that durst not be conscious of weariness, while the passengers lay warm below leaving their lives in his hand.

A man must have had charge of a ship to understand the full significance of commanding a large vessel. I cannot believe that even long familiarity could lessen in the heart of a true sailor the abounding sense of this large and magnificent trust by a jot. You would reduce the captain of a ship to a mere automaton in time if that were so. But when is it so? He embarks upon every fresh passage he makes with a mind as sensitive to his responsibilities as it was in the hour of his first taking command. The obligations are incessant; they are more or less the same each voyage, if you will, yet they affect the mind as brand-new duties all the same. A young sea captain may exhibit qualities which show somewhat worn out in an older man, but if the zeal be less in age the anxiety is as it always was. Indeed, no passenger can appreciate what is signified by moral and material conditions which involve the safety of lives and the security of richly freighted fabrics. The men are murmuring and a hand of iron is wanted, but the grasp must be a silent one, for on no account must the passengers be alarmed. Thick weather has forced the commander to his trumps in dead reckoning, and the current is subtle enough to defy the inquisition of the lead line. But all expression of preoccupation and worry must be smoothed out into blandness and cheerfulness and affability in the presence of the gentlemen and ladies in the saloons. The binnacle card is not more faithful in its responses to the movements of the helm than is the

honest British shipmaster to the calls upon his duty. Of course, there are exceptions. We most of us, I dare say, can point to men who are worthless as commanders, dangerously ignorant as sailors, fops and fribbles in their speech and bearing, far fitter for the stage or the music-hall than the honourable platform of the quarter-deck or bridge; tyrants and bullies to their inferiors in position, cringers and fawners to persons of distinction or wealth.

But having regard to the number of sea captains, the exceptions we are all able to indicate are really so few as to leave practically unblemished that high and excellent reputation to which every landsman who has ever made a voyage is always quick and eager to bear tribute.

One cannot but regret that the shipmaster should have reason to suspect the sincerity of the goodwill which he hears expressed for him on all sides. He finds his own claims and grievances neglected by legislators, who are too busy in listening to the complaints of fore-castle Jack to heed his representations. One crying evil for which he seeks redress is well known, and ought to be, therefore, well understood. For years he has been earnestly and respectfully entreating the attention of the legislator to his trouble, but it is only too certain that as yet he has met with no response. Novelists applaud him, newspaper writers extol him, passengers subscribe and present him with testimonials, but his professional life nevertheless is suffered to remain darkened by the shadow of a legal system which, were it applied to any shore-going community, would promptly result in riots and rectification.

I am referring to the procedure of courts of inquiry in the Mercantile Marine. It is quite unlike any other

process in the English law. When a disaster happens at sea the master is obliged to make what is called a deposition; that is to say, to relate the story of the misadventure. This deposition is despatched to the Board of Trade, where it is decided whether an inquiry shall be held or not. If the decision be for an inquiry, then counsel's brief is drawn up from the deposition and the case is heard. Witnesses are examined and cross-examined, and upon the answers made on oath the prosecution founds the charges which are submitted to the judgment of the Commissioner and the Nautical Assessors who sit with him. The shipmaster's grievance is that no charge is made previous to investigation. If a landsman commit murder or robbery the count is a clear one; the accused exactly knows what he is to be tried for; but when a shipmaster is called before a court of inquiry, neither he nor those who undertake his prosecution have any notion as to the form the charge will take; *that* is left to be gathered from the evidence coaxed out of him by a bland and insinuating counsel. He is thus compelled to incriminate himself. In no other court, under no other circumstances, is such procedure encounterable. You tell a landsman that he need not give evidence against himself, though he comes before you red-handed with murder, and you say to a shipmaster in effect, "We desire to prosecute you, but as we have no notion whatever of what you are guilty, we intend to court you into telling us all that is to be elicited from you by men trained to work upon such artless minds as yours, and then to procure your conviction upon what you have been silly enough to babble out." It is sheer monstrous injustice, I think; only a little less astonishing to my mind than the irresolution the shipmasters of the nation have discovered in deal-

ing with it. What does conviction mean to a captain? His certificate is suspended for three, six, perhaps twelve months, or it may be cancelled. To suspend his certificate is to deprive him of the means of obtaining a livelihood. It is a stain, too, upon his professional dignity and honour. Jack locked up for six weeks with hard labour for deserting, is far better off than the shipmaster whose certificate is suspended for three months; for Jack when enlarged goes to sea again; no disgrace attends his having gone, however involuntarily, into retreat. If he was a good man before, he is a good man still, but a captain without a certificate must starve if he has but his calling to depend on, and to take it from him is like depriving the painter of his brush, the writer of his pen, the artisan of his tools. I say, then, that having regard to the penalty that attaches to the shipmaster's conviction it is infamously and disgracefully unjust that the law which applies to him is a process which we should not dream a moment of sanctioning against a murderer, a wife beater, or a child seducer. It is true that there is a court of appeal open to him, but the game of law is a costly diversion to the richest; to the poor, in our justice-loving country, it is almost a prohibition, and, I am sorry to say, that the shipmaster must be ranked amongst the poor, along with the poet, the novelist, and the priest.

What are the shipmaster's responsibilities? I remember, some years ago, reading a brief paragraph in a morning newspaper that impressed me mightily. A steamer had fallen in with another that was in a sinking condition. She sent her boats to the endangered craft and brought off the people. The rescued commander of the sinking steamer was on the bridge by the side of the captain who had delivered him and his crew, looking at

his vessel that was fast settling down, when he dropped dead. The doctors might give a big Latin word to the cause of his death, but the sailors of the rescuing ship, along with those who had been brought off from the foundered craft, made it intelligible by a plain English expression—*his heart was broken*. His ship, his little property, his interests, his hopes, his professional chances, were gone, and the whole weight of the thing coming upon him in a sort of wild revelation, as it were, on top of physical weakness induced by long hours and, perhaps, by long days of bitter soul-subduing anxieties, proved too much for the man. His heart broke, and he fell dead at the feet of his brother captain.

Accept this as one illustration and issue of the shipmaster's responsibilities. I remember once being at Gravesend. A huge lump of a ship belonging to the National Line lay abreast of the town. The whole length of her bulwarks glimmered with human faces. It looked as though the population of a big town had gone afloat in that high looming metal structure. Some one told me that there were a thousand emigrants aboard, foreigners—Scandinavians for the most part—who had compelled the captain to anchor on the grounds that the ship they were in was not the ship that they had been told would convey them to America. A thousand people! And suppose you add a hundred of a crew, counting firemen, stewards, and the like, making eleven hundred souls! One catches a glimpse of the shipmaster's responsibilities in such a picture as this. You may argue that a captain habituated to this sort of traffic loses his sense of the significance of the solemn and enormous trust confided in him; but I say no. Produce a man who is really at heart insensible to all the significance

of such an obligation of stewardship as this, and you simply submit a person who is absolutely unfit for the trust. I have no wish to idealize, to blow my soap bubbles, and to point to the iridescent mirrorings as representations of the truth. The marine life, as a calling, is prosaic to the core; but I am not to be persuaded that the master of such a ship as that which lay off Gravesend, standing upon his bridge in mid-ocean in the darkness of the night, will not feel keenly the weight of a responsibility such as could never bear down upon a landsman's brain, when he sends his thoughts to the mass of beings sleeping under his feet dependent upon his own and his officers' vigilance, looking always to *him* first, and indeed to him only, sleeping secure in their faith in his dutifulness and his intrepid devotion to his work as a sailor. There is no fame to be got out of duty of this kind, no thunder-making cannon accompanies it, there is no brilliant conquest in it, no inspiration of a nation's hopes. It is a very simple, obscure business, yet to my mind the honest manly fulfilment of such obligations as fall to the lot of the British commercial captain is a form of achievements whose nobility could gain nothing from the lustre that makes shining the story of our naval conflicts.

But in taking a view of the Merchant Service a very small purpose only can be served by fixing the gaze upon the great ocean-going mail steamers. A man in charge of a thousand or eleven hundred lives may have an acute sense of the responsibilities of his calling, but then, though he makes a more heroic figure to the fancy than that of the captain in charge of a small cargo boat, the anxieties of the latter may nevertheless be tenfold greater than those of the latter. Imagine the feelings of a man hauling out of dock in an ocean tramp loaded

so as to look, but for her bulwarks, as flat as a board on the water. She has been freighted down to that ironical symbol called Plimsoll's mark in the course of a few hours, and our friend is trying to get away to sea with a half-drunken crew by a night tide, whilst the managing owner exerts his utmost wits to hoodwink the Board of Trade surveyor. The dock gates are open. "Go ahead," is the cry. "She's a little deep, captain; but she'll lighten anon—she'll lighten anon." Thus this most unseaworthy ship manages to slip out, with the captain and mates praying to God that the surveyor may catch sight of the vessel yet and stop her, though their own mouths are sealed. What kind of anxiety is comparable to this? Does the landsman suggest that the captain should represent the condition of the ship to the owner, explain the hideous peril of a voyage in such a craft, and exhort him to lift so many tons of cargo out of her hold that she may have a chance to live should she encounter dirty weather?

Alas, there are too many needy captains floating about to render such plain speaking practicable. Let Jones hesitate at the sight of a vessel that lies almost awash at the loading berth, and there are a thousand Smiths close at hand, willing to take less money than Jones has agreed for, to navigate the steamer to her port, or to the bottom of the ocean, as it may happen. I cannot imagine a vocation fuller of abominable worries, big and little—and the little by their number as galling as the big—than that of the master mariner in charge of the small cargo boat. If he is not prompt in his passages he is dismissed by his owner; if his anxiety to be prompt so as to please his owner brings some disaster upon his vessel, then the Board of Trade fastens upon him. "Think," cried an indignant master of a collier, "of a

passage from Rotterdam to the Tyne in thirty-five hours through a dense fog. But," he continues, "if the captain of a ship is longer generally in his passage than other vessels, owners will turn him out, although he may be the most careful of men to manage a steamer in foggy weather." Between two stools the shipmaster must come to the ground. I remember one of the captains in the service of the General Steam Navigation Company telling me that he once started from Boulogne with a large number of passengers on board, and that when he was somewhere off the South Sand Head there blew down a thick dark fog. It was impenetrable. He debated, and made up his mind to bring up. He lay for many hours in the thickness, and then, on the weather clearing, he proceeded for London. On his arrival, he was asked how it happened that he was all these hours behind time. He explained; pointed out that he durst not risk the many lives below by proceeding. "Ay," was the answer; "that is all very well; but here is Captain So-and-So, of such and such a steamer belonging to our service, who arrived from Calais so many hours ago. He met the same weather, but his theories of despatch differ from yours." My informant did not lose his berth, but he was so hotly handled for his tardiness that he vowed, fog or no fog, never again to stop his engines, let follow what would.

One gets an insight here into the sort of anxiety the shipmaster feels. He cannot see the length of his vessel, yet if he halts—if, in a word, he acts as a sane man should, and as all commanders should be forced to act if the Legislature knew its mind when it fell into nautical moods—he stands to be dismissed on his arrival. If, on the other hand, to provide against the temper of his owner, that he may continue earning bread-and-butter

for his wife and children at home, he thrusts through the fog and runs a vessel down and drowns a number of people, the Press resounds with wild editorial cries ; all the landsmen want to know how such reckless rascals as this are appointed to trusts which demand every quality of foresight, judgment, and the like ; finally, the lawyers attack him, and if he is not next to be heard of in the Union, it may be because he has taken the liberty of hanging himself.

I have spoken up heartily and in all sincerity for fore-castle Jack in these articles ; but I will not deny for a moment that when he is a troublesome Jack he has it in his power, what with drink, desertion, disobedience, and mutiny, to render the shipmaster's life infinitely burdensome. The mates, too ; I have known some mates to enormously increase the captain's responsibilities and anxieties by their villainous conduct. Such a thing has been heard of as a mate, on the arrival of the vessel, going to the owner and swearing that the master was drunk during the greater part of the voyage, that he was incapable as a sailor, and the laughing-stock of his crew. The fellow knew he lied, but the master nevertheless had to undergo the misery of a public trial ; the anguish of having to listen to cruelly damaging accusations which were absolutely foundationless. The master vindicated his character, but it might have been otherwise ; for I blush to say that there is a disposition amongst English crews to grossly misrepresent their captains, and a fellow striving to ruin his commander need never be at a loss for testimony by inquiring for it in the fore-castle.

In proportion as we recognize and understand the responsibilities of the shipmaster, so shall we find his character, viewing him in the aggregate, the more

admirable. We are every day reading of his humanity at sea, of his skill and courage under conditions of his calling unknown to an older generation, of his excellent fortitude and noble capacity of self-denial in the face of supreme danger and in the bitter moment of death. His flag is not the crimson cross, but he serves under bunting as honourable, as historic, as memorable for great deeds, though their relations lie obscure in the pages of the naval historian. It is not at his hands that the honour of England's commercial flag can ever suffer; if that dominant symbol is to be tarnished or degraded, it will be by those who impose upon the British merchant captain anxieties which ought to find no place in the catalogue of his responsibilities.

VANISHED FORMS OF THE SEA-LIFE.

THE Queen's Jubilee, as we all know, was the occasion of a very great deal of literature on the many and wonderful changes which have happened during the fifty years her Majesty had then reigned. But though there was abundant reference to the march of science, to the progress of education, to taste and achievement in the fine arts, to letters—yes! the man of letters who writes upon everything will always have much to say upon literature—though old books were explored to exhibit by citations the difference between the manners and customs of fifty years ago and those of our own time, the manifold changes in the direction of dress, sports, amusements, entertainments, and the like, the reference throughout to the transformation wrought in the marine, not only as regards the forms, substance, and materials of ships, but their inner lives also, their internal equipment, accommodation, provisions, and so forth, was so scanty that it probably bears the same proportion to the whole that an obscure paragraph in the corner of a newspaper does to the sheet that contains it.

Yet it is only necessary to recall a few of the vanished forms of the sea-life to understand that probably all the changes which have happened ashore put together are not comparable in magnitude and significance—and in significance certainly to us as a great maritime power—

with those which may be indicated by pointing to the dock, the seaport, and the ocean. I do not purpose entering upon any stale contrast between the wooden line-of-battle ship and the latest example of the armour-clad, between the topsail and the steam engine, between our father's notion of bulk as expressed by tonnage and our own. There have happened other changes than these, more secret, being hidden under deck, and therefore occurring silently, hardening into our experiences as habits, as customs to which we have grown so used that when even as middle-aged people we look back and reflect how different it all was but quite a few years ago, the interval between, for the wonder of the transformation that has taken place, seems as long as a century, and staggers us with doubt as to our own age.

I am old enough to remember how the first-class passenger fared twenty-five years ago in ships which were then advertised as A1 copper-bottomed—crack craft of the Blackwall, and other lines flying the house flags of Duncan Dunbar, Money Wigram, Green, Smith, the Aberdeen White Star, and so on; and it was but the other day that the memory of the old cuddy, with its long table flanked by cabins, its two or three stewards at the most, the skipper in the middle of the table crosswise abaft, his weather-bronzed face standing out in strong relief against the decorated trunk of the mizzen-mast, occurred to me as I sat at dinner in the saloon of an ocean mail steamer of hard upon five thousand tons burden. The saloon was of the whole width of the ship, a most noble and spacious apartment, sumptuously furnished with mirrors, luxurious chairs and sofas, gay with hand-painting, glittering with rows of lamps fitted for the electric light, a deck soft as eider-down to the tread with rich carpets, overhead a dome of brilliant glass with a

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gallery round it, and daintily furnished rooms within. I computed the attendants upon the diners to show an average of close upon one waiter to every three chairs. The tables went down on either hand the saloon with a long centre board all draped with snow-white cloths, radiant with crystal and silver, and flowers and ferns and greenery. Every table was full. There was the buzz all about of people full of talk, soft girlish laughter, the popping of champagne corks, and nothing in the world to lead you to suppose that you were on board ship saving the lift and fall of the line of the horizon against the glass of the great ports and the stealthy throbbing you felt on the chair on which you sat, in the table on which you reposed your arm, in the deck which your feet pressed, of the mighty iron heart of the steamer pulsing distantly deep down in the furnace-tinctured cell of the Fire Fiend.

But it was not the contrast between sail and steam that impressed me at that moment. True we were seething through it on a level keel at a speed of fifteen or sixteen knots in the hour, a defiant progress there was little or nothing in weather to hinder, and that would continue, be the heavens blue or black, be the breeze in our teeth or dead astern, until the propeller had swept us to our destination; whilst aboard a sailing ship we should have been lying over at an uncomfortable angle, smiting the bow sea with long floating rushes, and finding weather enough in the hour to dismiss the unseasoned amongst us from the sight of warm soup and cheap Marsala to the vacuous ease of the cot or the bunk. The contrast that impressed me mainly lay in the literature of those dinner-tables. I could not but think of the old plain roast and boiled of the magnificent Al copper-bottomed frigate-built ship that made a good

passage to Australia or the East Indian ports in four months with the bill of fare I held in my hand. Roast and boiled! Why, no first-class hotel with the shops of a metropolis to recruit its larder from close by could have tempted one with more delicacies than did this ocean steamship's *menu*. Nor were they names only uttering promise to the eye to break it to the palate. Fifty years ago! Heaven bless us, what would the old voyager in his green high-collared coat, his beaver hat, his enormous satin stock and pins, have thought of such a princely floating habitation as this in which I sat thinking of *him* with the electric light to presently counterfeit the effulgence of the sun when the evening shadow darkened upon glass dome and great windows ere the career of the meal had run its fifth or sixth course.

And yet the many clever gentlemen who ably dealt with the changes which have happened since our good Queen was crowned could find nothing to say upon marine transformation outside the impertinently obvious feature of the metal man-of-war! I possess a little book called "The Quid." It was published in the year 1832. It is a vulgar little book, loaded with poor puns, which were thought a very good sort of wit in those days of Hook, and Barham, and Hood, and illustrated with vilely drawn coarse cuts, chiefly representing sailors, rude and grotesquely bad imitations of Cruikshank's most exaggerated manner. Besides being published at Paternoster Row, it was to be had "At Benoinmont's Cigar Divan, 2, Myddleton Quadrant, Spa Fields." The volume relates the experiences of a steerage passenger making the passage to Calcutta in an Indiaman. He does not give his name; perhaps he was Mr. Benoinmont, for a strong flavour of the Cigar Divan haunts every page. Yet, so far as it goes, so far as the writer's

experiences are conceived, it is manifestly truthful, and in consequence of real value, even as an imperfect memorial of a vanished form of the sea-life. His ship was the *James Harvey*, "a merchantman of about 600 tons." Now, a vessel of 600 tons in 1832 was reckoned a very large ship. One would look for handsome accommodation in her, for a liberal table, and for other features which placed the Indiamen in the first ranks of the mercantile fleets then afloat. How the cabin passengers fared the author of "The Quid" does not tell us, beyond hinting at the provisions supplied to the cuddy table in a poem from which I shall shortly quote. But the sufferings of the steerage passenger, even on board a fine, tall, stout ship fifty years ago, may be gathered from this passage—

"What a place to be in! A cabin eight feet by ten for six of us; three sides of the berth taken up by bed places, one above another, like a Margate steamer; turn which way you will you encounter messmates—lying on shelves, as it were; mine unfortunately the lowest." The theory of ventilation was but imperfectly understood in those times. We may therefore imagine the atmosphere of such a cabin as this in the tropics, and on the other side of the Cape, as the ship nears the Indian Ocean. To the heat must be added the unsavouriness of a vast surprising variety of smells, not to mention beams black with clusters of cockroaches, and rats creeping up out of the hold after the light was extinguished to nibble the toe-nails of the sleepers. The provisions supplied to the steerage passengers were apparently identical with those served out to the crew: what the author calls "everlasting salt pork and potatoes." The state chair of the mess consisted of a water cask, a sea chest served for a table, seats were impro-

vised out of trunks, which, being of different sizes, made the company look like a very irregular troop of the "awkward squad," as they sat waiting to fall to. The table cloth was part of an old sail. The pork was cut up and helped first, that room might be found on the table for the potatoes, the peelings of which, flung upon the deck, resembled clusters of mole-hills. The mustard was served up in a gallipot, the pickles in a milk pitcher, and the after-dinner grog—there was plenty of grog going in those days at sea—in a basin. Sometimes they boiled the pudding in a passenger's nightcap.

In some verses printed in this little volume, entitled "The Economic Steward, or Management at Sea," so liberal a bill of fare is made out for cabin use that it is difficult to read it without distrust. The author speaks of fish, flesh, and fowl, ham, mock-turtle soup, salmon, minced veal, "though," says he, "no calves are killed on board," fresh turbot and lobster sauce, a haunch of venison, loins of beef, and the like, and winds up with this explanation—

"In short, at dinner, however nice the taste,
We please the palate, and yet there is no waste,
For if the secret truth may be revealed,
These dainties are preserved, hermetically sealed."

If this be true, then the art of canning, preserving, and tinning delicacies is considerably older than I for one had any idea of. Sailors advanced in years will know perhaps whether the author of "The Quid" speaks the truth in the matter of the cuddy bill of fare of his day. Beef, mutton, and fresh pork are intelligible enough when reference is made to live stock; but our author expressly tells us that nothing was killed to procure these dainties, saving indeed the poultry; whence we are led to infer that the marine larder fifty years ago in

passenger ships was mainly furnished with preserved articles of food ; though imagine a whole sirloin of beef canned in its integrity ! or a haunch of venison in a great jar !

There is another vanished detail of the old maritime life upon which our author has nothing to say. I refer to the risk of attack by the enemies' privateers, and by craft acknowledging no other nationality than that which the Jolly Roger expresses which attended every voyage Indiamen as well as most other vessels made. For this form of ocean danger one must indeed look back to an earlier date than 1832. What a naval war might in our time signify to the passengers and crews of ships, whether steam or sail, nothing but experience can settle. Everything is changed. In truth, it needs an effort of imagination to revivify the old East Indiaman with her numerous crew, her batteries of grinning cannon, her stores of small-arms, and the rest of the fighting furniture of the vanished times. No disquieting thoughts of pirates or of privateersmen keep a man restlessly tossing in his bunk when he goes to sea, whether as sailor or passenger, in our day. Our grandsires did not enjoy our security ; a crowd of convoyed ships were easily dispersed by a gale of wind, and every vessel steered her own course on her own account. Then it was that one quiet evening a sail would be descried broad on the weather beam, growing with astonishing nimbleness into a large schooner, let us say, with a hull moulded to the very perfection of racing lines. The darkness would draw around, and the stranger, quietly luffing, would settle upon the Indiaman's quarter, no man visible aboard of her perhaps save a chap at the long tiller, and a tall bearded man, in a piratical red cap, standing on the rail, with his arm round a backstay, watching the big

ship. The poor lady passengers! Think of the fluttering of muslin dresses and plumed headgear! "I don't like the look of that fellow," says the captain to his chief mate; "better see all clear ready for him if he tries to lay us aboard; so beat to quarters, Mr. Grog-blossom." The ladies are requested to keep below out of the way; Jack loads his gun, strips to the waist, feels his biceps, and spits in his hand for a grip of the cutlass handle. The male passengers may fight or not as they please. As a rule they *did* fight, and very heroically too, blazing away at whiskered desperadoes, repelling the boarders, wielding the pike as only British hands knew how, covering themselves with glory, often shot dead or perishing ultimately of their wounds. Again and again the ship was captured; but then again and again the pirate, the privateer, the ship of state was repulsed with great slaughter and compelled to sheer off. 'Tis a vanished detail and a familiar story, but to be recurred to, nevertheless, if we desire to grasp to the heart the full significance of the changes which have happened at sea since our fathers were schoolboys or (many of them) young men.

One obsolete form of the ocean calling the mariner may well recall, with lamentation over its extinction: I mean the obligation of owners under the Navigation Laws to employ in their forecastles crews mainly composed of Englishmen. Ships put to sea with handsome companies of men in what Jack might fairly call, in respect to this feature, "the good old times." In the *Naval Chronicle* of 1803 is printed a resolution passed at a court of the Directors of the East India Company to the effect that every ship of the burden of 750 to 800 tons should be navigated by 101 men, while ships of a less burden were to be navigated by men in the propor-

tion of $12\frac{1}{2}$ to every 100 tons. The list reads like that of a man-of-war's crew. There were six mates to start with, together with the surgeon, a surgeon's mate, a cook for the captain, and a cook for the ship. There was also a steward for the captain and a steward for the ship. The boatswain, gunner, carpenter, had two mates apiece, the caulker and the cooper one each. There were six quarter-masters, and among the "idlers," as they are called, I observe a barber. There were eight servants to attend upon the captain, mates, and petty officers, and 50 sailors to do the work of the ship. This was the complement of a vessel of 750 tons; but a vessel belonging to the Company of 1200 tons went afloat with a crew of 130.

The difference between such companies as this and such companies as now man sailing ships I regard as the most organic of the obscurer changes which have occurred in the British marine. I freely admit that war then imposed obligations upon owners which have long ceased to exist; but war or no war, our fathers held a numerous ship's company to be as essential to the safety of an ocean-going craft as the caulking which kept the water out of her seams or the yards and masts which enabled her to spread her sails. A 2000-ton sailing ship now is reckoned to be handsomely served if she can muster a crew, all told from skipper to cook, of from 25 to 30 hands, who may be thus classified—a full half foreigners, of whom probably four or five can scarcely deliver two consecutive sentences in the English tongue; one-third English, mainly of the "turnpike" order, ill-clad "pier-head jumpers," whose capacity as sailors scarcely goes beyond the art of scrubbing the decks. The rest you may call captain, mates, and apprentices. It is pretended that the machinery that has been intro-

duced into shipboard work so facilitates manual labour that very few men can now discharge the duties which in former times demanded the muscles of a small army. But whilst it is true that you halved your sails, it is also true that you have diminished your men altogether out of proportion with the facilities you claim to have imported. It is not because our fathers considered 12, 14, or even 16 men necessary to haul out the earrings and tie the points of a four-reef single-topsail, that three or four men should be thought enough in these times to handle the upper topsail of a vessel perhaps three times as big as any fabric afloat fifty years ago that flew the red ensign. Large crews of able seamen, in the true sense of the word, must be regarded as a vanished form of the marine life.

Another detail has disappeared as completely as the pirate and the slaving schooner flush to the hatches with woolly heads; I mean the convict ship. There is a good description of one of these vessels in Commodore Wilkes' narrative of his expedition in 1838-42. There was a convict ship at Sydney when he was there. He inspected her, and found her a very grim structure indeed. Between decks was a strong grated barricade, well spiked with iron, through which the officers could see whatever might be doing amongst the prisoners. Bunks, every one of them large enough to accommodate five persons, were erected on each side the ship all the way to the bow. There was no outlet save through a door in the steerage bulkhead, where stood a sentry with a loaded musket. The hatches were strongly grated and guarded. The fare of the criminals was that of the gaol, and their eating utensils were of wood. Misbehaviour was punished by the culprit being placed in a narrow box, in which he was compelled to stand erect.

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Over him was poised a cistern of water, which, if he was at all free with his tongue, was turned over upon him. By this means he was coaxed into holding his peace.

This ship is a vanished form, one of the wildest and most dramatic of the many which have been smote by and foundered under the iron stem of progress. Nothing I apprehend can impress the imagination more than the fancy of a vessel of this kind far out at sea, bearing her burden of human sins as manure to a soil that was to yield a most prodigal and magnificent crop indeed, in response to its horrid enrichment by England's crime and misery. Dreadful pathos attaches to the memory when one thinks of the freight of the convict ship as formed wholly of women. Most of us have read the story of the wreck of the *Amphitrite*, off Boulogne. She was full of female convicts. Numbers of the dead bodies thrown up by the sea were described as those of women who must have been beautiful in life—English girls of exquisite shape, white as milk, with golden hair, darkened by the brine, streaming to their waists. The stars shining over the ocean solitudes, have looked down upon many pictures of human misery, but upon none darker than the convict ship. She has sailed away into the shadow of the past, she is no more than a phantom vessel now; yet still so weird with the ghostly haunting of sin and anguish, of the broken heart, of the malignant spirit, of the remorse of the penitent, of the black broodings of hardened and irreclaimable profligacy, as to be to the imagination a far darker, a more terrific fancy than any death ship or Flying Dutchman, though built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark, with Death the skeleton at the helm, and a crew accursed of God to do her work.

And yet a close inspection of the marine life will not

find the changes which have happened so manifold as they at the first blush might appear. It is the revolutionary Steam Fiend that makes the big figure. After this demon comes iron, and then various points of internal economy. The transformation in some respects is complete. Elsewhere the survivors will be found sufficiently numerous. I was lately turning over the pages of Cooke's sketches of ships, smacks, and other craft, published in 1829. The old line-of-battle ship is there, and the little "ten-gun pelter," as the brig used to be called; there is a noble drawing of the stern of a first-rate, with cannon grinning between the great windows and under the balconies, in which one still seems to see the claret-coloured admiral stalking, lifting a long telescope to his one eye from time to time. These things have gone, but much that Cooke drew remains. His barge still sails the Thames and Medway, though gayer with finery, perhaps, than she was in his time; the snow still jogs on her various errands down Channel; we have halved our topsails and topgallant-sails, but in other respects his full-rigged ship is much as ours is.

One marked change, however, I think we in this age have a right to dwell upon with satisfaction. Every one must admit that the master and mate of to-day are, as types, distinctly superior, I will not say as seamen, but as persons of intelligence and education, to their predecessors. In the crack ships there were of course crack men—men of the Commodore Dance school, plain, courteous, upright, sailorly gentlemen; but in the lower walks I am afraid there was a good deal of barbarism. There was no obligation of certificate. A man obtained command without official recognition of his claims to office, or his qualifications in any respect. If you desire

to know what sort of a man the average commander of a small passenger ship was in the last century, you need not look further than to Fielding's account of his voyage to Lisbon. But to come to a much later date, I find a suggestive passage in the life of Henry Taylor, of North Shields, published in 1811. In the ship to which he refers, he says that the men were nearly all young: "The captain was one who indulged himself in bed during night, and in every situation; the mate, a middle-aged man, was much addicted to strong liquor." They cleared, got their stock of spirits on board, and proceeded. It fell dark, and the master, as his custom was, went to sleep and left the ship to the care of the chief mate, who after a little invited Taylor and the others of his watch to drink grog with him; by which, says he, "we thought ourselves honoured, and we gave him so freely of ours that in a short time he fell stupidly drunk down into the steerage. The wind was at W. or W.N.W., and blew fresh. We were at a loss what to do. We could not think of acquainting the master, and therefore as some of us had been up the Baltic we resolved to run the ship on until the watch was out, which we did safely, so that when the second mate came on deck we were nearly abreast of Moon Island and in a fair way." This let us hope is distinctly amongst the vanished forms of the sea life and one of many others, against whose resurrection all good sailors will heartily pray.

MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES.

I HAPPENED once to find myself in company with a number of nautical men of several denominations. We were a very grave and sober lot, talking without noise, and smoking for the most part with countenances rendered serious by our willingness to listen to one another. We were, indeed, a community of which a description might very well deserve a place amongst that list of odd clubs of men which Oliver Goldsmith gives in one of his essays. The conversation went from one topic to another, till it came to our talking about the strange things which happen to some men during their lives.

One of the captains said that he supposed there was no man or woman living to whom something out of the way, something more or less mysterious and impressive, something of a kind to last out a lifetime as a memory had not occurred. This set us looking at one another, and after a little one of us said, though to be sure he could not recollect that anything very surprisingly strange had ever happened to him, yet he once fell in with a man who told him a story which went to prove that so far as he, meaning the man he fell in with, was concerned, there was truth in what the worthy captain had said. Very gravely and soberly we all asked him to relate the story, and with a serious cast of countenance he proceeded as follows:—

"It happened," said he, "in times when executions were public, when a man was 'turned off' before a crowd and left to dangle as a genteel hint to the sight-seers to mind their eye. The man I fell in with told me he had been second mate of a small vessel that had lately arrived at the docks. He was paid off and went to live in a lodging-house somewhere down the Commercial Road way. He was then in tow of a girl, a pretty lass, sweet as a milkmaid to the senses, but was holding his hand from marriage till he should obtain command, as his wages wouldn't serve to keep up a home. She lived with her mother, and was a fair true girl, very fit for a sailor's sweetheart, and properer still for his wife. Well, he hadn't been ashore four days when he got the news that there was a chap to be hung at the Old Bailey for piracy. He had never seen an execution, and he made up his mind to witness this one as a sight to think about when out upon the ocean and nothing to do but walk the quarter-deck alone. He asked his sweetheart if she would like to go with him. She hesitated, saying it was a terrible sight. He answered 'Yes, it was a terrible sight; but not worse than a house on fire, with some innocent woman standing burning in a top window and helpless children roasting to death in a back room. People,' said he, 'would crowd to view such a scene as that; yet surely it was more awful to witness a poor woman burnt alive than to see a man hanged for murder and piracy.' The fact is, he desired her company, and he reasoned so earnestly that the girl consented to go with him, partly out of curiosity, partly because she saw what he wanted, partly because he made the jaunt out to be harmless, innocent, and perhaps edifying.

"Well, they started very early—almost at daybreak

—to get a good place. They kept the matter secret from the mother, who did not know that her daughter had left the house until she went to call her.

When they got to Newgate Street there was crowd enough; still they would be sufficiently near the scaffold to have a good view of the execution when the time came to ring up the curtain upon the horrible show; but, bit by bit as they stood, the crowd grew, got denser, more thrusting and jamming. From all parts of London the people came in processions like so many rivers flowing into a great lake, until the pressure and the heat became scarcely endurable. The girl, who was standing to the left of her sweetheart, cried out presently that she was being pressed to death and must suffocate. His posture was such, owing to compression, that he could scarcely move his head. He said to the girl, 'I shall put my whole strength into turning my back upon you; jump upon it, but don't hold me too tightly by the neck, or I shall drop.' He was a powerfully built fellow, with a prodigious chest, and arms of the strength of the legs of a cart horse, and, squaring his elbows with a mighty effort, he wedged space enough to enable him to give the girl his back. She sprang upon it, and feeling her wrists upon his shoulder he clasped them. Just then there was some commotion in the heart of the crowd to the right of him; people were fainting and dying there, women shrieking, men groaning and cursing. The crowd surged a bit, which gave this strong sailor his chance, and, putting his whole force into the effort, he thrust through, often treading upon a body as he advanced, the people closing behind him like water in the wake of a vessel, until he came to where the crowd was thin; and then, breathless and half-dead with exertion, he tenderly slid his sweetheart from his back to the

ground, knowing by her weight and silence that she had long before fainted, and, turning to kiss and comfort her, found that he had brought a strange woman out of the crowd, and that his girl lay dying or dead in the heart of the mass yonder."

We sat for a while in silence, soberly smoking and digesting this story. Then one of us said, Yes; the circumstance might be what one would call a memorable thing, but there was nothing mysterious about it. He himself once underwent an experience which was of the sort the captain was talking about; something brief enough to be told in a few lines, yet big enough to fill up the memory till one's dying day.

"I was walking," said he, "to my home from a near neighbouring town on the seashore by way of the sands. The water was quarter flood, with a good stretch of sand betwixt the base of the cliff and the wash of the surf, and there was no need to be in a hurry. It was a fine summer night, a little after ten, dark, but with starlight enough going down to the horizon to show the sea line rounding out down there firm and gleaming as a mirror looks in dusk. There was very little air, and the night was uncommonly silent, and the stiller, may be, for the hush upon the face of the huge cliffs towering over me; for the moan of the surf was a thing of itself, a sort of solitary crying which left the quiet unbroken. I was tramping along, lost in thought, when all on a sudden a deep voice, that appeared to come floating off the sea, within a dozen fathoms of me, exclaimed—

"*'This is the hour, but not the man!'*"

"I stopped dead, and peered seawards, but could see nothing, though had there been anything to view, the starlight would have made it plain to me. I was still peering, with something of a sweaty feeling creeping

damp upon me, when I heard a whizzing and rushing noise in the air, and an instant after the thud of something soft that had fallen within a few feet of me. I ran to it. It was the body of a man that had either fallen from or jumped over the cliff a hundred feet above. I turned him over; his head was crushed to pieces. There was no need to stand looking at or feeling him to know that he was as dead as if he'd never been born. So far as I could see, he was well dressed, and had a handsome watch and chain upon him, which I had sense enough to remove, along with a pocket-book and a cigar case, and one or two other trifles that might serve to show who he was.

"I durst not linger, for the tide was rising, and I had yet two miles to walk; nor, indeed, will you suppose that I had a mind to stay, being all alone, in the shadow of the dark cliff, with the sound of the surf in my ear, and the silence outside, and the horror and mystery of the voice that had come off the sea, and the sight of the dead man in the faint starlight. I walked away for home as fast as I could, and on my arrival went straight to the only constable our little village owned, put the property I had taken in his hands, and told him the story. The water was washing the cliff by this, so there would have been no use in sending to seek for the body."

The speaker paused.

"And what was the end of it?" said one of us.

"Why," he answered, "the body was washed out to sea that night, and was never afterwards heard of. They advertised the things I had found, but nobody ever came forward to claim them or to hint a notion to whom they belonged. The man's death was as deep and wild a mystery as the syllables I had heard sounding out of the sea. It's a true yarn, mates, on my word

of honour as a sailor. I can hear that strange voice now, by going backwards in fancy and listening a bit."

Another spell of grave reflection and sober smoking followed this story; then one of us said—

"What the captain would call a memorable thing happened to a man I was once shipmate with. He became mate of an Indiaman. He was then about five and twenty years of age, one of the handsomest seamen that ever trod the deck of a ship. There was no particular need for him to follow the sea, for his father had died leaving him a few thousand pounds upon which he could very well have set up as a gentleman ashore. But his heart was in his calling, and his chief ambition was to command such another fine vessel as he was mate of. Well, I was third mate of the same ship under him, and when I left her I lost sight of him. It was about four years afterwards that, going into a London eating-house for a plate of beef, my eye was taken by a man sitting alone at one of the tables. I looked, and he looked, and then we both recognized each other at once. He was the man who had been the chief mate of the Indiaman that I was third aboard of. He gave me a sailor's grasp, and I sat down, and we fell to a regular four-stranded, left-handed twister all about old times. He was still the same handsome man whom I remembered, with a pleasant look of happiness in his eyes and the kind smile of a contented heart. Whilst talking, in moving my foot somewhat impetuously I struck against what I conceived to be a leg of the table; but, wondering that there should be such a prop as this amidships, I took a peep under the cloth, and was surprised to find that it was my friend's wooden leg I had kicked. I expressed my concern, and asked him how so great a misfortune as the loss of a leg had happened to him.

“He smiled, whilst something like a blush came into his face. ‘I must tell you the truth, I suppose,’ said he, after a little reflection, during which he continued to eye me with a half-humorous, half-bashful expression. ‘Three years ago there was amongst our passengers homeward bound one of the most beautiful girls it was ever my fortune to see. I instantly fell in love with her. She was an orphan, the daughter of an officer who had held high rank, and, having buried her father, was returning to live with her aunt in a London suburb. Physically, she was absolutely faultless in everything saving her walk. She moved but little, and when she did so I observed that she had a peculiar limp. I took this to be some affection of the hip, and managed, lover-like, to find a new charm in it, as one does in the lisp of a sweet pair of lips or a faint cast in a pair of beautiful eyes. The captain saw how the land lay, and let me have my way. I knew by a hundred signs long before we were northward of the equator in the Atlantic that she was in love with me; but, all the same, she declined to marry me. I thought there might be pride in it, fear of connections, money or some twopenny consideration of that kind, but she would answer, “No, no, no,” to all my questions on these heads, though she strenuously refused to give me the real reason of her declining my hand. We arrived in the Thames, and she went home. She gave me leave to visit her, and the instant I could get clear of the ship down I went to the address she had furnished me with. Her aunt was a particularly nice, sensible old lady, and I took an opportunity of being alone with her to speak to her about her niece, and I begged her to tell me, if she could, the motive the young lady had in refusing to marry me, both of us being devoted to each other. After some hesitation the lady

informed me that her niece's reason for not marrying was she had a wooden leg."

Here the speaker stopped.

"Well?" said some of us, impatiently.

"Why! can't you guess?" he exclaimed. "How was my friend to keep such a sensitive sweetheart as this in countenance except by having one of his own legs taken off?"

"Gammon!" we shouted.

"But it's the living truth, though. He could not find a surgeon in this country to do it, and was for studying medicine with a notion of raising some sort of disease in his limb that should oblige him to lose it without imperilling his life. He went to Paris, but he had to proceed as far as Italy before he could meet with an operator who was to be rendered willing by the clink of dollars. Then, with a timber leg upon him, he returned to his sweetheart, who, as any man may suppose that has the slightest acquaintance with the female heart, accepted him right away off, and, as he told me, sitting at that eating-house table, with a flourish of his wooden shank, to let me see what a sturdy sapling it was, he and his wife were the happiest couple in the United Kingdom."

"A fool!" cried one of us. "Such a fellow deserved a large family of wooden legs."

Whereupon we all fell silent again, smoking soberly.

"There happened a memorable thing," exclaimed a man, "to a sailor that I was acquainted with. His brother had died from what they call a scirrhus liver, and this fellow took it into his head that his liver was diseased too, and that he was bound to die. The doctors ashore told him that his liver was all right—a bit stiffened out perhaps by too much drink, but still an organ that

was likely to go on doing its work if reasonably treated. But all to no purpose. The sailor was satisfied that he must die of his liver, and this grew into a sort of craze with him, until, indeed, it was as sheer a piece of madness as the fancy that one is made of glass and mustn't sit down for fear of breaking, or the notion that you're too fat to get out of a room. He was making a voyage to the Indies aboard a big passenger ship when this craze about his liver came to its height. He told his mates that he was bleeding internally, and was going to die, and with that got into his bunk and stretched himself along as though he had a fancy to expire in a composed and decent posture. The sailors knew his weakness, but as his white face and deathlike quiet now didn't look like shamming, they took the news aft, and the mate came forward. He seemed to think the man dead, and spoke to the surgeon, who proceeded to the forecabin to see what could be done. 'Humph,' said he; 'yes, poor devil, his fears proved wiser than my knowledge. I told him his liver was all right, and now I find the unhappy wretch dead of it. But it can't be helped. Here,' said he, 'one of you bring me the carpenter's grindstone along, that I may sharpen my knife, as I am curious to know the character of the disease that has killed this miserable man, and I will cut him open.' He had no sooner said this than the corpse flew upright, with a stare of terror at the formidable table-knife which the surgeon flourished, and, hopping out of his bunk with incredible alacrity, he fled on deck, pursued by the surgeon, amid the shouts of the men, who were ill with laughing. It was the completest resurrection and recovery ever heard of. The man was never afterwards known to complain of his liver."

"There is no doubt," said one of us, "that lunacy

is to be cured by fright, just as it may be brought on by the same cause. There's no better medicine than fright for more maladies than madness. A man lay helpless with rheumatism in a railway carriage; there was a collision and a mighty burst-up. When the man came to, he got up and ran about, being perfectly cured."

"Talking of memorable things," exclaimed the ship captain who had originally started this conversation, "did any one of you ever hear the yarn that's called 'Old Booty's Ghost'?"

We were all silent.

"It happened a long time ago," continued the captain, "but it's not the less worth telling for that. Three ships arrived off an island in Indian waters to fill their casks and to obtain a supply of fruit and the like for the crews. One was commanded by a Captain Bristow, another by a Captain Brian, and a third by a Captain Barnaby. There was a small volcano in the heart of this island, which was supposed to be extinct, but on the day following the ships' arrival, the three skippers being ashore along with a number of the men, the mountain threw out a body of flame and a huge cloud of smoke that blackened the sky. Whilst they were all staring they saw two men run past them with amazing swiftness in the direction of the burning mountain. The first man was dressed in grey clothes, the other, who seemed to be chasing him, was all in black.

"Captain Barnaby cried out, 'Lord bless my heart! Why, the foremost man is my next-door neighbour, old Booty. Gentlemen,' he exclaimed, 'pray look at your watches, that we may be all agreed as to this marvellous thing.'

"They did so, and found the time fourteen minutes past three in the afternoon. On their arrival in Eng-